
Maria A. Schenkeveld

Dutch Literature in the Age of Rembrandt



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Volume 28

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Themes and Ideas

John Benjamins Publishing Company

Amsterdam / Philadelphia

1991

Cover design: Françoise Berserik

Cover illustration: Eglon Hendrik van der Neer (1634-1703), *The Reader*.

Oil on canvas. 38.1 × 27.9 cm.

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Schenkeveld, Maria A.

Dutch literature in the age of Rembrandt : themes and ideas : Maria A. Schenkeveld.

p. cm. -- (Utrecht publications in general and comparative literature, ISSN 0167-8175 ; v. 28)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Dutch literature -- 1500-1800 -- History and criticism. I. Title. II. Series.

PT5141.S44 1991

839.3'109'003 -- dc 20

91-22425

ISBN 90 272 2214 2 (Eur.) / ISBN 1-55619-426-9 (US) (hb.; alk. paper)

CIP

ISBN 90 272 2216 9 (Eur.) / ISBN 1-55619-427-7 (US) (pb.; alk. paper)

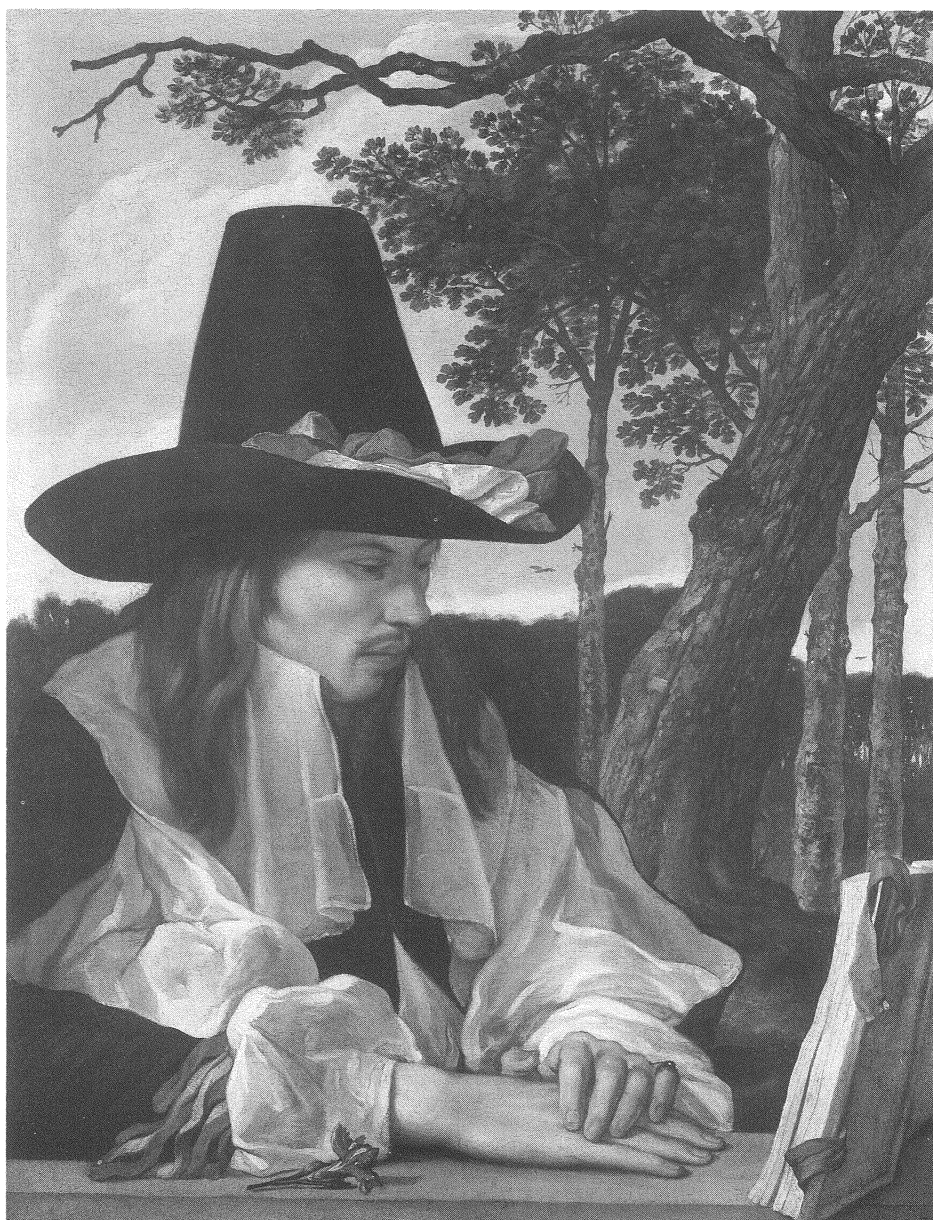
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1. North Netherlands School, *A man reading*, ca. 1660.

Preface



Precisely four names from the Netherlands figure on the famous list appended to E.D. Hirsch Jr.'s *Cultural Literacy* (1987): Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Rembrandt and Vermeer. The two cities have significance for the present time. Rotterdam was undoubtedly included as the largest port in the world, Amsterdam as an important tourist center. The names of the two painters, on the other hand, refer to the past, more specifically to the Dutch Golden Age, the seventeenth century. Insofar as the culture of our country is known abroad, this is the outstanding period. Consequently, it has received ample attention by a number of non-Dutch scholars. It may suffice to call to mind the cultural historical studies by J.L. Price, *Culture and Society in the Dutch Republic during the 17th Century* (London 1974) and Simon Schama's recent *The Embarrassment of Riches. An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (New York 1987).

It remains an amazing fact that a small country in a marshy delta was able to fight its way to freedom from under the oppression of the Spanish world power and to develop subsequently into a major economic and political power itself. This power was accompanied by an unprecedented cultural flourishing. The Dutch painters Rembrandt and Vermeer, but also Ruysdael and Frans Hals are world-famous. Equally renowned are Hugo Grotius, the jurist, Christiaan Huygens, the physicist and the philosopher Spinoza.

The men of letters have remained less known. The simplest explanation, of course, is that they wrote in Dutch, a language read by very few people outside the Netherlands and the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium. However, this explanation does not suffice in Price's view, for instance. In his study he argues that the social difference between poets and painters also led to a difference in quality.

The poets, who did not need to live by their art, failed to free themselves from classical, conventional forms, while the painters, thinking commercially and aiming at a large market, broke away from the prevailing taste and opted for the famous Dutch realism.

It is certainly not my intention to test in full the value of the hypothesis on which Price's influential study is based. But I shall try to show that his view of Dutch literature as conventional and mainly based on classical models is markedly biased. Dutch literature in the Golden Age showed a strong social concern and was able to reach large sections of the population. Sometimes it was, indeed, oriented towards the classics, but what exactly does that mean? For one thing, imitating the scurrilous epigrams of Martial is not the same as following the Virgilian epic. Moreover, in other instances literature actually rejected the classics and defended "the book of use" — as the poet Bredero put it — as valuable reading. Sometimes literature aimed at an audience consisting of a schooled literary elite, at other times it tried to influence the masses.

Anyone interested in Dutch culture in the Golden Age, whether his emphasis is on painting, politics, religion or even economics ("the prince of poets" Vondel wrote a poem on the Amsterdam Bourse!), should therefore be concerned with literature as well. However, this happens all too rarely. A favorable exception is Deric Regin who was able to support his argument in his *Traders, Artists, Burghers. A Cultural History of Amsterdam in the 17th Century* (Assen 1976) with a fair number of quotations from poetry. In the large panorama painted by Schama literature received only a very minor place, however, although in it he might have found most interesting material connected with his theses.

Now it must be granted that it is rather difficult for a non-specialist to find his way into the literature of this period. There is, for instance, no separate general survey in English, although there are useful chapters on the period in two literary histories: Theodoor Weevers' *The Poetry of the Netherlands in its European Context 1170-1930* (London 1960) and Reinder P. Meijer's *Literature of the Low Countries; a Short History of Dutch Literature in the Netherlands and Belgium*, of which the second edition was published in 1978. Sizable sections of these books deal with the literature of the seventeenth century. But there are, of course, limits to the amount of material that can be discussed in a single chapter. Moreover, neither book offers illustrations or more than a very restricted number of references or directions for further study.

It is this lacuna that I have wished to fill. The present book is not a literary history. It does not give a chronological overview of the literature and does not discuss specific authors or genres. Besides, the book has a certain slant. More (though not exclusive) room is given to poets as functioning in their own daily lives and in that of their co-citizens, than to the high-flying authors of tragedy and

epos. I have placed the authors in their social and cultural context and tried to indicate the type of audience they wrote for as well as the political, religious and social aims they were pursuing. For this reason a structure has been chosen in which the material is not grouped around specific authors or genres but around important themes. The topics selected are those that might have some interest for general readers and scholars from other disciplines: politics, religion, nature and daily life. Because Golden Age painting has always attracted the widest interest I have devoted a special chapter to the intensive relations between painting and poetry in the period concerned. A concluding chapter intends to show something of the Republic's function as a kind of literary trading center in Europe with a brisk import and export business. The illustrations also serve to show how literature functioned in society.

Blood runs thicker than water. Although in this book I wanted to embed literature in the overall culture of the seventeenth century, I could not resist the temptation of using many examples, and therefore citing many texts. A small anthology, added as an appendix, offers additional material. Anyone interested in more should consult the list which gives a number of published translations.

Parts of chapter 5 earlier appeared in *Dutch Landscape; the early years*, catalogue of an exhibition at the National Gallery in London, 1986, edited by Christopher Brown; chapter 4 was partly offered as a lecture at a symposium on genre-painting at the Royal Academy (London) in 1985.

Friends and colleagues have offered help and advice: Svetlana Alpers, E.M. Beekman, Arie Jan Gelderblom, D.M. Schenkeveld, Marijke Spies, Willemien de Vries and the anonymous referee of N.W.O., the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, that gave a grant for the translation of the book. Once more, it was a pleasure to work together with Hans Luijten in finding the appropriate illustrations. He also was a devoted proofreader. Special thanks are due to August F. Harms who took care of the translation and especially gave his best in translating the many poems in such a way that the poetical form and flavor have survived. Myra Scholz has given invaluable editorial assistance, both as a native American speaker and as a scholar in the field of Dutch literature. The ABN-AMRO bank generously offered financial support, showing in this way its interest in a period when the political and economic prosperity of the Netherlands found also expression in a cultural and literary Golden Age.

I

Poets in society



The Golden Age

Particularly since romanticism it has become customary to call the seventeenth century the Golden Age of the Netherlands. Filled with nostalgia, the nineteenth century Dutch looked back towards a period in which the Netherlands had appeared to be almost the very hub of the universe. Trade was flourishing then, the Republic was a dreaded power, and Dutch painters were producing the masterpieces that would make them world-famous. But in the seventeenth century itself people also seem to have been aware of living in an exceptionally prosperous era. Joost van den Vondel, the Netherlands' most famous poet, speaks of a "gouden lettereeuw" (golden letter age) in a poem praising the foundation of an Amsterdam academic institution (Vondel III 1929, 372) and in another poem, dedicated to the birth of a young prince of Orange, the 'Oranje May-lied', (Orange May-song) he uses terms referring to Vergil's fourth eclogue, in which the return of the Golden Age was also connected with the birth of a Redeemer (Vondel II 1928, 762).

Usually the Golden Age is considered to extend from the beginning of the seventeenth century to around 1672. Its origin is connected to the course of the Eighty Years' War against Spain. Towards the end of the sixteenth century the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands felt reasonably safe within its borders

started to diverge. In the South, a court was still in residence and the Roman Catholic Church kept its dominant position, also as a patron of the arts. The North had a court of sorts, that of the Stadtholder who was not a real sovereign but strictly speaking no more than a servant of the States. This princely court at The Hague, however, did not develop into a center of culture. Nor did the Protestant church as such commission works of art, although indirectly it had a definite impact on literature.

The Northern culture was a bourgeois culture. The patrons were the municipal authorities and well-to-do private persons, merchants or magistrates. The cultural center, therefore, was not The Hague, but Amsterdam, the wealthiest and most powerful city of Holland, in its turn the richest and most important province of the Seven United Netherlands. With a few exceptions the Golden Age of the Republic actually was the Golden Age of Holland.

That Amsterdam and Holland were to develop as cultural centers was something hardly anyone would have dared to forecast on the basis of the immediate past. For centuries Brussels and Antwerp, the powerful cities of the Southern Netherlands, had played the leading parts. It was at Brussels that the Burgundian dukes had resided; subsequently, at the start of the Eighty Years' War, it was also the residence of the governors appointed by emperor Charles V and king Philip II of Spain, to whom the rich Burgundian states (including the Netherlands) had devolved. Antwerp was an important trading center and it was no coincidence that the Reformational ideas of Luther and Calvin had found acclaim there and a firm base for widespread distribution. This is always a peculiar thing to realize for somebody who knows that by and large the present Netherlands are Protestant, while Belgium now is Catholic.

A crucial moment in this story is the final recapturing of Antwerp by the Spanish troops in 1585. The port, till then Europe's most important one, had been a seedbed for innovative thinking and a center of resistance against the Spanish rule that was increasingly felt as a tyrannical yoke. For a number of years William of Orange, Stadtholder of Holland and Zeeland and leader of the Revolt, had been able to hold on to Antwerp, thus keeping an essential major foothold in the South. In 1585, however, the city had been forced to surrender after a siege. As a result the river Scheldt, that formed Antwerp's link with the North Sea, was closed off by the Northern troops, a stroke that immediately and for long years to come cost Antwerp its leading position in trade.

That position was now taken over by Amsterdam in the North. The fall of Antwerp may be considered typical for a whole process. The years of the Revolt, during which in the South the Catholic authorities took severely repressive action against the Protestants, persecuting and exiling them, had resulted in a true



3. Cornelis Anthoniszoon, *De vermaerde koopstadt van Amstelredam* (The famous city of Amsterdam), 1544. Earliest known map of a city in the Northern Netherlands and first printed map of Amsterdam.

exodus. Many merchants and industrialists also left and often sought refuge in the North. That meant loss of capital and expertise in the South and an identical gain in the North. And it was also the cause of the religious turn-around mentioned above. The refugees from the South were in fact the Protestants with the strongest convictions, and the faith for which they had given up so much remained to them of the greatest significance. The Southern immigrants actually became the core of the Reformed congregations and filled important posts in the church councils. In

absolute numbers Holland was anything but a Calvinist country at the start of the seventeenth century, but the minority group of Reformed Protestants had an extraordinarily large influence, also from a cultural point of view.

The poet mentioned earlier, Joost van den Vondel, may serve as an example here. He was the son of parents who had had to flee from the South because of their Protestant faith. His grandfather had gone first to Cologne in Germany, together with several of his children, but his highly pregnant wife had been arrested and was threatened with burning at the stake. In order to save her, one of the children that had fled was brought back to Antwerp and baptized in the Roman Catholic church. So tells us Vondel's friend and first biographer Geraardt Brandt (Brandt 1932, 4-5). That girl, who together with her mother was later reunited with her father in Germany, was to marry another exile and become the mother of the poet, who was born while the family was still living in Cologne. Towards the end of the sixteenth century the family moved to Amsterdam. A background like this was shared by many leading citizens and, for that matter, by some poets as well, and it had of course a strong impact on religious and political thinking. That Vondel, after a long period of spiritual casting about, was to become a Roman Catholic again, is one of those pretty pranks of history. It shows, however, the lasting influence of the Catholic church in the Calvinist North and might also be considered an example of the religious tolerance in the Republic.

The political situation

The structure of the Dutch state was highly complex. The Republic consisted of seven Provinces. Each of these Provinces was governed by its own States and the whole of the Republic by the States General. The States had existed already earlier when they functioned as representatives of the population. The Sovereign had to negotiate with them, for instance, regarding taxes and levies. Their roles became crucial in the Revolt that resulted in the Eighty Years' War (1568-1648) and the independence of the Republic. A theoretical justification of the Revolt was found in the circumstance that the Sovereign had failed to keep his contractual duties to his people. The fiction, however, was kept up that it was not the king himself, but his representative, the Spanish governor Alva, who was behaving like a tyrant.

Only keeping this in mind, can one understand the 'Wilhelmus', the national anthem of the Netherlands. Originally it was a propaganda song in honor of prince William of Orange. It is a longish poem of fifteen stanzas, containing the acrostic WILLEM VAN NASSOV. The first stanza, now the only one regularly sung, is a kind of introduction of the Prince:

Wilhelmus, born of Nassau
 Of German blood am I.
 Allegiance to my country
 I pledge, until I die.
 A prince of distant Orange
 I am, fearless and free.
 Always the Spanish monarch
 Has been revered by me.

Wilhelmus van Nassouwe
 Ben ick van Duytschen bloet,
 Den Vaderlant ghetrouwe
 Blijf ick tot inden doot:
 Een Prince van Oraengien
 Ben ick vrij onverveert,
 Den Coninck van Hispaengien
 Heb ick altijt gheeeert.

(*Geuzenliedboek I*, 97-99)

The strophe shows something of the involved political and dynastic situations. William was a member of a German noble family, his father being count of Nassau, but one should not forget that the Netherlands, too, could be considered part of the German empire, and no opposition is meant here between the "German blood" and "my country". William had also inherited the French principedom of Orange, which made him a sovereign prince in his own right. But his first allegiance still was to the king of Spain whose servant he was as Stadtholder. All this may explain to foreigners the rather confusing fact that Dutchmen appear to pledge allegiance to a Spanish king in moments of solemnity.

In the song that sentence is spoken by William as Stadtholder of Holland, Zeeland and Utrecht, who had, however, chosen the side of his oppressed people, and therefore of the States, and by doing so had to oppose his rightful master. This he did, as the 'Wilhelmus' explains, reluctantly: as long as he could, he wanted to honor and obey the king. But when the king, so it is presented, sanctioned the tyrannical conduct of his governor, and even encouraged him, he deserved to be discharged from his royal authority. This occurred in 1581. In a solemn statement Philip II was abjured as sovereign by the States General. A highly unusual vacuum of power was the result of this unprecedented action. There were now lands without a sovereign. This made the States nervous at first and they offered the sovereignty to a series of princes, among them Elizabeth I of England. But, as this repeatedly failed, they finally adopted the sovereignty themselves and thus, more or less unplanned, a Republic came into being.

In the meantime there still were the official Stadtholders, appointed by the King, of whom the incumbent for Holland and Zeeland was particularly important. William of Orange fulfilled that function and continued to do so, in his own

eyes, also after 1581. In fact, though, he was a substitute for nobody. Thus the Stadtholders' position became most peculiar and ambiguous. They governed in the place of the non-existent king, had no sovereignty of their own, but had to be considered, in principle, as servants of the States. Still, their behavior had some dynastic features. For a long series of years they were succeeded in a purely dynastic manner by their sons, or brothers as the case might be. William of Orange, murdered in 1584 on Spanish instigation, was succeeded by his son Maurits († 1625) and he, for lack of legal offspring, by his brother Frederik Hendrik († 1647), whose son William II († 1650) was the next to hold the office. This situation almost inevitably implied that the Stadtholders tended to consider themselves as monarchs. William II went too far in this direction when he let himself be persuaded to lead an assault on Amsterdam in order to strengthen his position versus that fortress of the bourgeoisie. The assault failed and had disastrous consequences for the position of the Stadtholder. William III, the posthumously born son of William II, was not accepted as successor to his father and the Republic enjoyed its first so-called "Stadtholderless period". This lasted until 1672 when young William III was offered the Stadtholdership after all, in the hope that he would protect the threatened Republic against the advancing French troops — which he did with great success. It was, by the way, this young man who sixteen years later by invitation became king of England.

The conflict of interests between Stadtholder and States was of decisive importance for the domestic policy of the Republic for a long series of years. Frequently we find them in opposing camps, the Stadtholder and the Grand Pensionary, at first little more than the secretary of the States General but often the most influential man in the Republic. Thus, Johan van Oldenbarneveldt was the great adversary of Maurits, until this became his undoing and he was executed in 1619. Later Grand Pensionary Johan de Witt led the opposition to the appointing of William III as his father's successor. He, too, perished as a result of his anti-Oran-gist persuasion, in a horrible lynching in 1672.

The antithesis was sharpened, particularly in the conflict between Maurits and Oldenbarneveldt, because of a religious factor in the controversy. Precisely in the period of the Twelve Years' Truce in the Spanish war (1619-1621), the Reformed Church was rent apart by a dogmatic conflict over free will and predestination. The Remonstrant faction, also called Arminians after professor Arminius from Leyden, gave some room to man's free will: he was able to, and should, accept the outstretched hand of God. The Counter-remonstrant believers, or Gomarists (after Gomarus, another Leyden professor), adhered strictly to the doctrine of God's free election: man cannot contribute anything whatsoever to his salvation. The religious and political conflicts became inextricably intertwined. Maurits chose the side of the Counter-remonstrants, and Oldenbarneveldt



4. Published by or attributed to Salomon Savery, Joost van den Vondels *Op de Waeg-schael* (Pair of scales).

became the leader of the Remonstrant faction. A power struggle arose, also in the military field, because Oldenbarneveldt authorized the cities to levy troops of their own. Evidently this was an assault on the position of the Prince as supreme commander of the army. In the Dordt Synod (1618-1619) the Remonstrant conviction was condemned; at the same time legal proceedings against Oldenbarneveldt were started on account of alleged high treason.

This controversy, that permeated many areas of Dutch culture, also left deep traces in literature. Passionately, authors indulged in pamphleteering wars, and long after the events emotions still could rise to dangerous heights. One of Vondel's better known poems deals with the topic in an ironic way which, however, should not mislead us: the poet was deeply involved as a supporter of Oldenbarneveldt for whom he cherished a life-long reverence. The poem serves as an explanation to an engraving in which the conflict is represented by means of a balance of which the opponents try to tip the scales.

The latest Dutch transformation

Gommer and Armin to Court
Their religious feud had brought.
In the scales of judgment went
Each propounded argument.
Doctor Gommer seemed at first,
The poor man, to come off worst
Since the clever, shrewd Armin
Against Beza and Calvin
Placed the robe of th' Advocate*,
Cushions of the magistrate,
And the brain, the source and spring
Of some solid reasoning;
Charters, too, from which were shown
The due rights of every town.
Gommer's eye sought far and wide
Till our Prince came to his side
And in Gommer's higher scale
Laid his blade, to such avail
That all other things proved slight
By the good sword's weighty might.
Gommer's image all then praised.
Armin from the scene was chased.

*Oldenbarneveldt

Op de ionghste Hollantsche transformatie

Gommer en Armijn te Hoof
 Dongen om het recht geloof,
 Yeders in-gebracht bescheijt
 In de Weech-schael wert geleijt.
 Docter Gommer arme knecht
 Haddet met den eersten slecht,
 Mits den schranderen Armijn
 Tegen Bezam, en Calvijn
 Ley den Rock van d'Advocaet,
 En de Kussens van den Raet,
 En het breijn dat geensins scheen
 Ydel van gezonde reen,
 Brieven die vermelden plat
 'tHeylich recht van elcke Stadt.
 Gommer sach vast hier en gins
 Tot so lang mijn Heer de Prins
 Gommers syd' die boven hing,
 Trooste met sijn stale Kling
 Die so swaer was van gewicht,
 Dat al 't ander viel te licht.
 Doen aenbad elck Gommers pop
 En Armijn die kreech de schop.

(Vondel I 1927, 790-791)

Court culture?

Whatever their political influence might have been, the Stadtholders rarely tried to wield any cultural power, for instance by way of patronage. William I, who had sold all his personal belongings on behalf of the Revolt, did not have the means, and the situation during his lifetime was not very inviting, either. Maurits appears to have had no artistic interests to speak of, being more interested in the sciences. Only Frederik Hendrik tried to give his Court some style, for instance by commissioning the decorations for the palace Honselaarsdijk. Through his secretary, the poet Constantijn Huygens, he also bought some works by Rembrandt.

Literary interests are not apparent and commissionings in this direction are even less frequent. In 1642 Hooft dedicated his *Nederlandsche historiën* (Dutch history) to the Prince, but there is no evidence of any reaction as regards the contents of this important book. The Prince had his secretary, Huygens, send a silver decanter with basin in appreciation. Huygens, friend and literary colleague of Hooft, could only supply the inevitable pun that the silver gift was to reflect the

golden words in which the Prince had praised the book (Hooft III 1979, 468). It is known, however, that Frederik Hendrik enjoyed Vondel's drama *Palamedes* (1625) which he had someone read to him, but it may be surmised that the tragedy, a pièce à clef on the Maurits-Oldenbarneveldt conflict, held his interest more because of the topical subject than its literary merits (Brandt 1932, 18-19). Neither is there any evidence that the Stadtholder was seriously interested in the literary products of his own secretary. Once only, actually before he held that office, did the young Huygens have occasion to rejoice: "Un prince a vu mes vers" — the fact that this joy found expression in a French poem reminds us that the Court language was not Dutch, but French (Huygens I 1892, 132-134).

The center of literary life, therefore, was definitely not The Hague, although some significant poets lived there, but Amsterdam.

Literary networks

Amsterdam boasted various centers of literary-cultural life of which the Rederijkerskamers (Chambers of Rhetoric) should be mentioned first. Highly active in various fields was the old Amsterdam Chamber *De egelantier* with its device 'In liefde bloeiende' (with an untranslatable pun: blossoming/bleeding in love, "bloeiende" in Dutch having both meanings; the blazon of the Chamber is an eglantine rose winding itself around a crucified Christ).

Amsterdam had chosen the side of the Revolt at a rather late date. The city did not switch allegiance before 1578, but then a new wind started to blow immediately and before long the existing cultural backwardness was superseded. Citizens who had been exiled because of their Protestant convictions returned and devoted themselves, of course, to political and religious reform. On the other hand, it was of great importance to the intelligentsia not to accentuate the contrasts. In these circles the opposition Catholic-Reformed was much less significant than the choice for a Christianity in the Erasmian vein in which dogmatic controversies were not stressed to any great extent.

An important figure in the Chamber 'In liefde bloeiende' was, for instance, Hendrick Laurensz. Spiegel (1549-1612), protagonist of a Christianity that does not focus on dogmatics but on a virtuous life with reason occupying the central position. He remained a member of the Roman Catholic Church, seeing no need for aggressive reformation. He was a representative of the well-educated upper stratum of society. His family consisted of merchants who regularly filled posts in the municipality. Spiegel himself refused to be invested with an office. He felt bound to his oath of allegiance sworn before 1578 and so was unable to become a public servant in the new political situation. Still, he felt responsible for the well-



5. Device of the Amsterdam Chamber of Rhetoric 'In liefde bloeyende', in *Twe-spraak vande Nederduitsche letterkunst*. Leiden 1584.

being of the commonwealth and, interestingly, in the letter explaining his point of view on taking office, he states his intention to serve the country in another capacity, namely by applying himself to the enrichment of his mother tongue.

His major work, *Hart-spieghel* (Mirror for the heart) (first ed. 1614), is in a way an ambiguous one. On the one hand it is a rather practical moral philosophy. The language in which it is couched is as Dutch as possible, without any foreign-looking words. It is surely with a programmatic intention that he expressly resists a literature that is wholly oriented to the classical tradition, asking rhetorically:

Must a Dutch poet needs a skillful expert be
In Latin, Greek?

Moet juist een duyts Poëet nu nodich zijn ervaren
In Griex-Latijn?

(Spiegel 1930, 49)

Any pragmatically educated Dutchman should be able, in his opinion, to understand his writings. On the other hand, however, his wording is heavy, strained, full of neologisms and compound words that are sometimes difficult to fathom. A reader who really wants to understand Spiegel's teachings, should be able and wil-

ling to invest a lot of time and concentration in the book. And this seems to indicate that Spiegel's work was not meant for the average citizen after all but for the well-educated upper class with sufficient leisure time.

On Spiegel's instigation, the Chamber did important work for the Dutch language. Under its auspices was published the *Twe-spraak van de Nederduytsche letterkunst* (1584), a dialogue on Dutch grammar. Indicative for the initial cultural lag of Amsterdam may be the fact that the production of the book was not entrusted to an Amsterdam printing house but that Plantijn's in Leyden received the order for what was, after all, a typically Amsterdam piece of work. The book was dedicated to the municipality of Amsterdam. This dedication sets forth how embarrassing it is that Dutch, by nature a rich language, is neglected to such a large extent. It is the first and firmest function of a Chamber of Rhetoric to be "a school of the mother tongue, open to anybody, without exceptions". One finds, indeed, that in the Chamber authors and intellectuals of various social positions worked together — at first, anyway — without serious problems.

The preface to the *Twe-spraak* was written by Spiegel's friend Coornhert, one of the leading intellectuals of the time — we will meet him in other connections too — who had been interested in the purification and enrichment of the Dutch language for a long time. The book takes the form of a dialogue and as one of the speakers we encounter another important member of the Chamber, the poet and entrepreneur Roemer Visscher. Wittily and significantly, the dialogue opens with Roemer's greeting: "*Bon jours*, neef (=cousin)" to which his conversation partner replies: "Goede dag (= a good day), *cozijn* (=cousin)" (Spiegel 1962, 10). In this way the then urgent problem of the Frenchification of the Dutch language is raised right at the beginning.

To the *Twe-spraak* are added an introduction to dialectics and a versified concise rhetoric, all in Dutch in keeping with the intended utility to the average educated citizen. Here the Amsterdam Chamber is the counterpart to the Leyden university, where a much smaller group of intellectuals was taught in Latin. An interesting detail, however, is the circumstance that the *Twe-spraak* found a place in a large number of private scholarly libraries of the early seventeenth century. Again the intended audience may not quite have been reached.

The road towards popular education Amsterdam had started upon was continued in the course of the seventeenth century. In 1617 several prominent members of *De egelantier*, led by Samuel Coster, left the Chamber because in their opinion too little room for innovations was offered. They founded the *Nederduytsche Academie* for sciences and arts, again with Dutch as the official language. The sciences are the innovative element here. Coster offered instruction in subjects that might be useful in business and overseas commerce, like arithmetic and astronomy, but also history and Hebrew, typical for a culture characterized by a

great deal of Bible reading. The Academy met with political opposition, however, and soon the classes were discontinued.

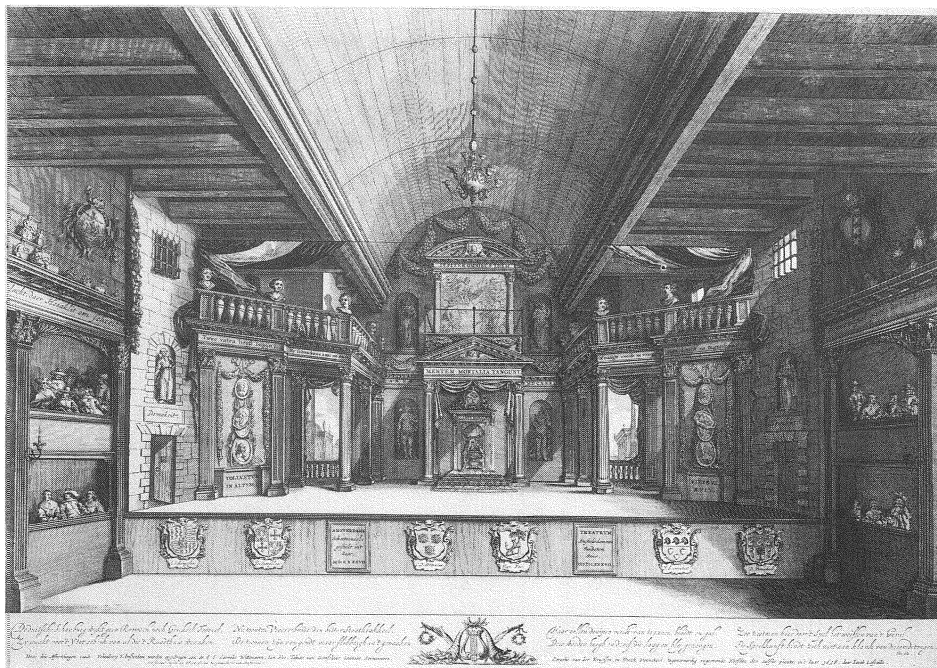
The arts had always belonged to the field of activities of the Chamber. Particularly for the Dutch stage 'In liefde bloeiende' did pioneering work. Hooft, Bredero and Coster, the most important playwrights of the period, presented their new works in this circle, and their innovations strongly influenced the Dutch theater for many years.

De egelantier was not the only Amsterdam Chamber. After 1585, immigrants from the South founded a Brabant Chamber, *Het wit lavendel* (The white lavender). One of its members was Joost van den Vondel. In 1632, however, the various literary-cultural societies in the capital merged, at the insistence of the municipality, and in 1637 a municipal theater could be inaugurated. The sciences were to be placed under the custody of the *Athenaeum illustre*, also founded in 1632, which, though not a complete university, offered introductory courses at an academic level. And so, although Coster's attempt to unite arts and sciences within one organization, his *Nederduytsche Academie*, had failed, both forms of culture could now be practiced in Amsterdam in a way appropriate for the most important town in the United Provinces.

The erection of the Theater building, the Schouwburg, had brought Amsterdam a great step forwards. It became an important cultural institution. Designing a consistent policy for its functioning was complicated, however, by a peculiar social-political fact. The takings of the Theater were earmarked for charitable municipal institutions, the orphanage and the old men's home. The board of the Theater, who decided which pieces should be performed, were appointed by the municipality of Amsterdam, on recommendation of the charitable institutions. The problem is obvious: conflicts could and did arise on the issue of whether to aim in the first place for box-office successes or for educative and edifying plays.

A second problem was formed by the circumstance that as a matter of principle the Reformed Church rejected theatrical performances in general and *a fortiori* objected to frivolous farces as well as tragedies with controversial religious contents. Thus, vehement commotions arose around the play scheduled for the inauguration of the Theater in 1637, Vondel's *Gysbreght van Aemstel*, because a Roman Catholic mass was to be enacted. Later Vondel's impressive *Lucifer* (1654), too, lay under heavy attack from the side of the ministry because it brought theology on the stage.

Members of the board of directors of the Theater had, of course, every opportunity to push their own ideas. Jan Vos (1610-1667), for instance, made a strong mark on theater policy in his time. His Horatian motto 'Het zien gaat voor het zeggen' (Seeing goes before saying) implied a well defined view on theatrical art. His own tragedies, *Aran en Titus* (1641) and *Medea* (1667) are highly turbulent



6. Salomon Savery, *Interior of the Amsterdam Theatre on the Keizersgracht with a view on the stage*, 1658.

plays with an enormous cast. They are full of blazing passions and thrilling moments, like those with people descending into the flames of hell and even a rape acted out on the stage. For drama that evolved in a purely classical, especially Greek direction, depending more on the beauty and rhetorical power of the text, like Vondel's later plays, there was hardly any place on the stage, although Vos in his capacity as a director tried his best to make some of these pieces visually more attractive by adorning them with tableaux vivants and little dances. The kind of plays that Vos produced needed a stage that allowed for quick scene changes and was equipped with stage machinery for the production of sensational spectacles. It was to make such things possible that the Schouwburg underwent a renovation in 1665 and so became one of the most advanced theater buildings of Northern Europe.

A third cultural group that is often referred to, the so called Muiden circle, is hardly more than an attractive myth that originated somewhere in the romantic nineteenth century. In fact, it was no more than a rather loose collection of friends

that on an ad hoc basis came together in the Muiderslot where the poet P.C. Hooft lived as lord of the manor. In the summer, Amsterdam artists and intellectuals might meet in nearby Muiden: Vossius and Barlaeus, both professors of the *Athenaeum Illustre*, Anna and Maria Tesselschade, the artistically gifted daughters of Roemer Visscher, the sweet-voiced Utricia Ogle and any number of other incidental guests. A few times Huygens came to visit from The Hague. But it was certainly no society or company that gathered for reasons of study or of practicing art.

More of an academy in the Italian and French sense of the word was the society *Nil vclentibus arduum*, closely linked to the Amsterdam theater by personal relationships. It was founded in 1669 out of discontent over the plays that were put on stage. Instead of the, as they saw it, worthless, sensational plays of Jan Vos and his followers, the members of this society wanted edifying drama that adhered to the rules of French classicist art. Members of *Nil* produced various literary-theoretical works. Andries Pels wrote an adaptation of Horace's *Ars poetica* (1678) and a topical didactic poem on the use and abuse of the theater, *Gebruik en misbruik des tooneels* (1681). In both works he expounded the demands quality drama would have to meet so as to be able to function in the education of the Amsterdam jeunesse dorée. Collectively, the *Nil* society wrote a complete drama manual, the *Naauwkeurig onderwys in de tooneelpoëzy* (Accurate instruction in dramatic poetry). This book, however, was not published until almost a century later (1765) and so was not very influential. The members of *Nil* belonged to the Amsterdam upper class and intellectual elite and their solidarity was with that group. For a short time they held a position of power because their leading men, Lodewijk Meijer and Andries Pels, were members of the board of theater directors. Also later, when the society itself had ceased to be of significance, their ideas continued to be influential. Thanks to their activity, for instance, changes occurred in the tone and tenor of the farces. In the first half of the century such plays had been excessively vulgar and obscene. Farces as propagated by *Nil* show in irreproachable language the edifying remorse of lazy students or pants-wearing housewives.

Only slightly earlier, but on quite a different social level, another art society was active in Amsterdam, a group that was accustomed to meet in the inn 'De soete rust' (Sweet quietness) kept by their leader Jan Soet. They deserve attention, especially because here, for the first time, we encounter a group of poets that is not oriented to the bourgeoisie. In Soet's work the common man is given voice to level his criticism at those in high places, all of whom he sees serving only their own interests. Even this group, however, does not constitute a real literary underground. Although Soet and his comrades are, indeed, outside the mainstream, which also appears from their religious association with the unor-

thodox chiliasts, they still adhere to the dominant pattern of standards and values. Characteristically, their collective publication is called *Parnassus aan 't Y, of Konstschoole ter Deugd* (1663), (Parnassus on the river IJ, or school of virtue).

So far, our attention has been directed towards Amsterdam's literary societies, but the net should be cast slightly wider than that. What Amsterdam lacked, with all its wealth and power, was a university. The *Athenaeum Illustre* of 1632, offering only the non-specialist courses of the trivium, could not fill this gap. Leyden, however, in remembrance of its heroic resistance during the Spanish siege, had been given a university by William I in 1574. As was to be expected, this university became a center of cultural flourishing. One of its first curators was Jan van der Does or Janus Dousa (1545-1604), who had studied in Paris and had there been in contact with some of the Pléiade poets. After his return to Leyden, he assembled a circle of humanistically orientated Neo-Latin literati. Another Leyden celebrity was Jan van Hout (1542-1609), town scribe and also secretary of the board of university curators. Van Hout was also one of the leading men propagating the new Renaissance literature in the Northern Netherlands. More than Dousa it was he who stimulated writing in the vernacular. But Leyden's literary star was Daniel Heinsius (1580-1655), professor of Greek as well as a famous literary theoretician. For the burgeoning Dutch literature it was no small triumph that this author of international renown did not consider it beneath his dignity to use his mother tongue as a vehicle for literature. His volume *Nederduytsche poemata* (1615) may not contain the most interesting verse of the period from a purely artistic point of view, but it had an enormous impact. To a considerable extent, this was undoubtedly due to the programmatic preface, written by his friend and ally, Petrus Scriverius, which sings the praises of the Dutch language. Earlier this had been done by the Amsterdam Chamber, but it was of prime importance that such sounds were now also heard from the Leyden classical bulwark.

Many writers received their academic training in Leyden, where, in the first decades of the seventeenth century, they also often made the acquaintance of Heinsius. Although Hooft spent only a short time at the academy, contacts between him and the famous professor arose, and it may be presumed that the latter strongly affected his ideas on modern classicist drama. Even closer were the ties between Heinsius and Huygens, much as their poetical convictions diverged. Also with Jacob Cats, the poet who did the most for the education of the Dutch people, Heinsius had good connections, and in the regular, mnemotechnically effective iambic alexandrines of his verse Cats followed the example of the admired teacher.

Leyden had primarily been founded to provide the Reformed churches with academically trained ministers. Now, young theologians were preeminently suited to carry culture to the peripheral provinces, since it was usually in the smaller

communities there that they began their ministry. Among the better-known names of Leyden alumni is that of Jacobus Revius, who spent many years in the Overijssel city of Deventer. Also a student in Leyden was Dirck Rafaelsz. Camp-huysen. After the Dordt synod, however, he severed his ties with the established Reformed church and began, exiled and persecuted, a wandering life that brought him to Amsterdam as well as to various places in Friesland.

Utrecht obtained its own university in 1636, the same year as Harvard, and it, too, brought forth poet-clergymen like Jodocus van Lodensteyn and Willem Sluiter, influential poets of the pietist and puritan movement of the so called Nadere Reformatie (Further Reformation). Also an Utrecht alumnus was the fashionable preacher and poet Joannes Vollenhove who started his career in Zwolle and ended up in prestigious The Hague — Huygens made jokes on his heavy oratorical style in the pulpit.

In the provinces, the Chambers of Rhetoric also kept playing a role. Even in small towns and villages these cultural organizations continued to exist. True, they sometimes were ridiculed as having as their main objective the consumption of considerable amounts of wine, and the rhetoricians were often portrayed as tipplers, for instance by Jan Steen. Nevertheless they had a considerable function in transmitting culture, by performing plays and organizing poetry contests. The eighteenth century farmer-poet Hubert Korneliszoon Poot, for instance, received his initial literary training in the Chambers of Rhetoric of neighboring villages.

Apart from these more or less official networks, there were, of course, many smaller, more informal groups. Although the Muiden Circle may not have properly existed, Hooft, together with Vondel and several others did belong, around 1622, to a study group that had as its aim to regularize the Dutch language so as to make it better suited to literary work of a high standard. The members also occupied themselves, as part of their efforts to elevate Dutch literature, with translations from Latin and Greek.

In 1623, a Zeeland network produced a book full of local chauvinism, called, with a measure of self-mockery, the *Zeeusche nachtegael*, the Zeeland nightingale, i.e. the frog. Only authors from Zeeland together with some honorary “Zeeuwen” imported from abroad, such as Huygens, were included. The aim of the voluminous book was to show that high-standard literature was also produced outside the dominating province of Holland.

Such circles of friends may often be traced by way of the introductory section in books of the period. Huygens, for instance, took great trouble over the threshold poems to his first collection *Otia* of 1625. Whether willing or not, all his literary relations were pressed to provide a laudatory poem.

Other groups may be traced to printers who gathered authors around themselves, for instance, by giving out commissions. Thus, peculiar anomalies may



7. Jan Steen, *Rhetoricians at a window*, ca. 1662-1666.

occur. Vondel's poem 'Het lof der zee-vaert' originated, no doubt on commission, as an introductory poem to the *Zeespiegel* (Sea Mirror), a manual for shipmasters and mates published in 1623 by the famous Willem Jansz. Blaeu. Who exactly was to read the poem? Vondel offers a thorough treatise, beautifully built up on a rhetorical basis, on ethical questions regarding seafaring. That was an interesting, even topical subject in intellectual circles at the time, but evidently not relevant to the intended users of the *Zeespiegel*. Still, it lent a certain amount of prestige to the work and as such may have fulfilled its function. Another name that should be mentioned here is that of the printer and bookseller Dirck Pietersz. Pers who also wrote poetry himself. He was of great significance to literary life in Amsterdam in the first half of the century. Tirelessly he put authors to work, stimulating the production of emblem books, songbooks and other illustrated works, among them his own translation of Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* (1644).

The social position of men of letters

To some extent, the above-mentioned networks had a socially equalizing effect. In the Amsterdam Chamber of Rhetoric *De egelantier* the patrician Hooft might enter into a literary contest with the petty bourgeois Bredero. Jan Vos, Amsterdam's town-glazier, was socially fully acceptable as one of the directors of the Theater. Still, it would appear useful to give attention to the social position of the Dutch literators, as there seems to be a clear connection between the way they practiced their art and the place they had in the social hierarchy.

The Dutch population of the seventeenth century can be classified in a number of strata. Traditionally, the top was formed by monarch and nobility. As indicated above, the Stadtholders had hardly any cultural impact. Much the same goes for the nobility as a group. For them, only a limited function had remained at the Court in The Hague. Their leading position had been taken over by the municipal patriciate that distributed all functions of any consequence within the cities among a restricted group of families. The patriciate had actually evolved rather recently, as may be exemplified by Hooft's family. The grandfather of the poet had been a shipmaster, the father became burgomaster of Amsterdam and the son preferred a rather quiet life in an executive function as lord of Muiden castle, near Amsterdam, and bailiff of the region, so that he might have the opportunity to devote more time to literature. To the same group belonged a man like Spiegel, with a family composed of entrepreneurs and magistrates.

Not quite part of the municipal patriciate, but just touching it from below is a rather broad upper middle class of merchants, shipowners and entrepreneurs. The boundary between larger and smaller enterprises is hard to draw. One of

Amsterdam's successful merchants was the poet Jan Six van Chandelier (1620-1695) who held no office within the city, however. He owned a business in dried spices and went on business trips to Spain and Italy, and also to England. For a part of his life, Joost van den Vondel ran a successful business in silk fabrics, an enterprise that necessitated traveling to Scandinavia for instance. He, or his son, ruined the business by speculations on the Amsterdam Bourse. After his bankruptcy and in recognition of his merits as a more or less official town poet, the magistrates gave him the office of clerk of the town pawnshop. Samuel Coster, mentioned earlier as a dominant member of the Chamber 'In liefde bloeiende' was a physician. So, too, was the recalcitrant outsider W.G. van Focquenbroch who worked half a century later.

Authors could also be found among truly small businessmen like Thomas Asselijn (1620-1701) who owned a dyeworks, that was run with varying success but ended in bankruptcy, or the drugstore keeper Jeremias de Decker (1609-1666) and the innkeeper Jan Soet (1608-1674). To a similar social group belonged the playwright and lyricist Gerbrand Adriaensz. Bredero (1585-1618). He was trained as a painter and, as he tells us, the practicing of this art brought him "sweet rewards" (Bredero 1986, 115). Still, he also held a minor post as a town official. His case may demonstrate the democratizing effect of the Chamber 'In liefde bloeiende'. He became a member when he was about 25 years of age and it was in these surroundings that he wrote his most important work as an esteemed supporter of the faction of Hooft and Coster who made efforts to improve the artistic level of the Chamber. It was the success of his comedy *Moortje*, an adaptation of Terentius' *Eunuchus* (1617), that induced Hooft to emulate him with *Warenar*, an imitation of a comedy by Plautus.

The socially highest-placed figures among the literati are to be found outside Amsterdam. Constantijn Huygens aspired to a career in diplomacy and it is to his first steps on that path that he owes his title of Sir Constantine, bestowed on him by the English king during one of his visits to London. He did not enter the foreign service, however, but was given a permanent post at the court in The Hague. From 1625 until his death in 1687, he served as secretary under three princes of Orange. It brought him, apart from the foreign title, several estates and fine mansions. A still higher post was attained by the popular poet Jacob Cats. During the first Stadtholderless period he was invested for a short time with the office of Grand Pensionary of the States General, the highest office in the Republic. Another high official was Johan de Brune, famous for his *Emblemata* (1624) with its beautiful illustrations of Dutch daily life; he held the post of Pensionary of the States of Zeeland.

As we have seen, the influential poet Daniel Heinsius belonged to the academic world, but he is rather the exception than the rule. At the universities,



8. Emblem 'Ghewoonte maeckt eelt' (Custom causes callosity) in Johan de Brune, *Emblemata of sinne-werck*. Middelburg 1624.

Latin was the prevailing language and an unbroken line of academic Latin poetry extends far into the nineteenth century. Among academically trained Protestant ministers and other intellectuals, such as physicians and lawyers, many Dutch-writing poets were found, however.

The mutual contacts were varied. Members of different social strata could work together to reach a common goal as in the Chambers and also in a more informal group such as the 'Letterkunstige vergadering' in which Hooft, Vondel and others occupied themselves with the study of the Dutch language. Yet, class differences did play a part. Vondel's sonorous, rhythmic style was little appreciated by a sharp, rational author like Huygens. But in the critical reactions of the courtier to the work of the silk merchant we hear also overtones of social superiority which are lacking when Huygens writes about an author like Cats, whose literary abilities he appreciates — for other reasons — no more than Vondel's, but who is closer to him in social status.

Women

Female authors were numerous in the Republic, but in the literary world they were of little significance. Willy-nilly, many of them functioned as the token black of a later age. Thus, Anna Visscher (1584-1651), daughter of Roemer Visscher and a good friend of Hooft, Huygens, Cats and Heinsius, was praised exorbitantly

by her contemporaries for her scarce but competent poems in rather insulting terms like “This is no maid, nor of the female sex” (dit ’s geen maeghd, noch van ’t gheslacht der Vrouwen); the implication, of course, is that she was a proper man (Vondel II 1928, 394). Women rarely published collections of poems. Actually, the only work that Anna published separately, was an adaptation of a book by her father. An exception is formed by Katharina Questiers and her friend Cornelia van der Veer, who published the volume *Lauwer-strijt* (Laurel-contest) together in 1665. The part accorded to Questiers by her male colleagues was more or less identical to that of Anna Roemers a few decades earlier. She, too, received excessive praise for her literary activities, ostensibly considered to be of an exceptional nature. Some decades later Katharina Lescaille, a bookseller’s daughter active in the trade herself, was honored, albeit posthumously, by the publication of her collected works. They consisted of a series of translations of French plays, as well as occasional poems by her own hand.

Reflection on the position of the woman author led, also among women themselves, to varying conclusions. A scholar of European fame, the Latin-writing Anna Maria van Schuurman, in principle considered women capable of working in the arts and sciences, but she still saw housekeeping as the primary responsibility of the female sex. Only a woman who is unmarried or has a sufficient number of servants, may indulge in writing. The influential Jacob Cats, spokesman of Reformed orthodoxy, also saw it that way in his many writings on marriage and family life. Opposition was poetically raised by Charlotte de Huybert, the daughter of a lawyer. She points out that as a matter of fact many Dutch women ran businesses of their own and pleads for corresponding juridical independence and even the right to hold office. The independent Katharina Lescaille was one of the few female authors who was able to put this theory into practice to some extent, but it surely was no accident that she, too, remained single.

All these women belonged to the (higher) middle classes, these being the only ones that could offer to women the necessary education and a modicum of leisure time — thanks to the servants mentioned by Schuurman — enabling them to devote themselves to the belles lettres.

The poet’s reward

No author lived solely by his pen. This subject has not been systematically researched yet, but one may safely assume that creative literary work usually was not paid for. An exception in the sixteenth century was the Antwerp patrician Jan van der Noot. After having been forced to leave Antwerp in 1567 on account of his active participation in a (quashed) Calvinist uprising, he returned to his home town after an exile of nine years. His material conditions had changed drastically.

In the years before 1567 he had not only written poetry himself, but had also been able to act as a patron to others. After his exile he had to provide for himself. This he tried first to do by offering himself as an officially appointed — and paid — poet of Brabant. Towards the end of his 'Lofsangh' (Ode) to that region, he lists a whole series of offices: there is the magistrate, there are registrars, pensionaries, but also executioners and police officers. So,

How could it possibly be damaging to you
 If you, among your fowl, so diverse, nice and true,
 Would keep a nightingale, most skillful in his song,
 Or a calm, peaceful swan, gliding white-plumed along,
 That would then loud and clear (godlike in every way)
 Either in Brabant style, or with some French lyre-play
 Sign and proclaim your praise, your virtues, without fail
 Over the ocean and throughout the earthly vale,
 So that centuries hence all people, young and old,
 Would still your virtue know by what he sang and told.

En wat dinck soudt u, toch meugen schaden, te houwen
 Onder soo veelderley vogheltekens, fris vol trouwen
 Oock eenen Nachtegael? kunstich in sijnen sanck,
 Oft een Swane vreedsaem, becleedt met pluimen blanck?
 Die claer dan singhen sou (med godlijker manire,
 T'waer op sijn Brabantsch spel, oft sijn Fransoysche lire)
 U deughden, uwen lof, en die soo over al
 Verbreyden over d'zee, deur het gants eerdsche dal,
 Datmen daer deur u deught over veel honderdt iaren
 Opendlijck kennen sou deur sijns schryvens verclaren.

(Van der Noot 1958, 30-32)

In this enticing manner Van der Noot seeks to turn into hard cash the Ronsardian topos that the poet writes for eternity. As officially as he wished he was not obliged, but the States of Brabant and the municipality of Antwerp did award him sums of money now and then. But Van der Noot was also active in the private sector where he served an international community. He produced poems in French and in Dutch and as an extra often provided a kind of paraphrasing commentary in, for instance, Spanish and Italian. In an original way he prepared for this clientele a varied series of quires filled with occasional poetry. The patron received a booklet in which the poem he had ordered took the first place, of course, but in which Van der Noot included a number of other texts, of a similar type, to increase the volume. The bibliographically interesting result is that the copies that have come down to us are all different, or, more precisely, that each sheet of the *Poetische werken* must be considered a separate bibliographic entity. In this way the little poem factory worked very efficiently: the patron received something that looked better than a single poem and the author was able to use his texts more than once.

Actually, Van der Noot was ahead of his time with his literary earning capacity. Not until the eighteenth century would anyone again try to earn a living by writing. In the Golden Age rewards were meant in the first place as a tribute and a token of appreciation. Thus, Vondel was commissioned by the Amsterdam municipality to write, for example, a poem on a royal entry. For that he was awarded, say, a golden cup, or an amount of money like the hundred guilders he received for the poem written for the occasion of the festive entry of a daughter of Frederik Hendrik and her husband, a Brandenburg general. In modern terms, the amount would not appear large, but if one takes into account that a reasonable salary for a vicar was Hfl.650 a year, the burgomasters do not appear at all stingy. The young poet Reijer Anslo was presented with a golden chain for a celebratory poem for queen Christina of Sweden. Jan Vos, too, was decently paid for organizing literarily oriented spectacles for festive occasions. A very high amount, that is Hfl.1000, was awarded to Casparus Barlaeus for the book he wrote on the occasion of the entry into Amsterdam of Maria de Medicis (1638). The description of all the festivities — in Latin, which made it fit for use all over the world — sang Amsterdam's glory in particular, and had been commissioned by the municipality. Still, it would be going too far to suggest that authors were systematically used by the authorities as copywriters in well-organized propaganda campaigns. Their contributions were too incidental for that and also, I think, grew more out of their own feelings of civic pride than out of a desire to please the government.

Private commissions were also given. An interesting but probably not very representative case is that of the English-born poet Jan Janszoon Starter. In 1622 he signed a (short-lived) contract with a number of Amsterdam merchants under which they received a monopoly to all his work. In turn he accepted the obligation to write what they wanted, but this would still be paid for separately. An epithalamium, for instance, rated Hfl.6. Whether Vondel was, indeed, paid in cash for the many epithalamia he wrote for highly placed persons in Amsterdam, we do not know. Jan Vos has repeatedly stated that he never accepted money from private sources for such work. Both Vos and Vondel did accept payment in kind, though, which might have been considered an honorable sign of appreciation rather than a fee for services rendered.

One may assume, however, that gradually a kind of versifying industry evolved here. The wealthier part of Dutch bourgeois society indulged in conspicuous consumption in its own way. The phenomenon of epithalamic poetry offers a good example. At first these occasional poems were written by poets who were linked by ties of kinship or friendship to the couple concerned. The texts were printed on modest broadsheets or in little booklets. As the century progresses, the volumes tend to grow in size from octavo to quarto and the number of contributory poets increases as well. Understandably, friendship does not remain a prerequisite for participation, either.

Especially from the beginning of the eighteenth century the endless production of this sort of occasional poetry is increasingly criticized and from the loudness of the protest one may conclude that poets and printers had succeeded in deriving a more or less fixed income from a widespread practice that bored to death all parties concerned: the poets who had to write numbers of poems on a theme that does not offer many opportunities for variety, and the bridal couples and guests who had to listen to the all-too-familiar laudatory clichés. It is likely, for instance, that a poet like Jan Baptista Wellekens (1658-1726) eked out a living by enlisting the support of a benevolent circle of Maecenases who expected in exchange an endless series of occasional poetry in the then popular pastoral vein. His *Bruiloftdichten*, a book of 500 pages, consisting solely of epithalamic poetry by this gifted but unhappy man, was published posthumously by his daughter in 1729. At about the same time, the farmer's son Hubert Korneliszoon Poot (1689-1735), who, quite extraordinarily in his milieu, had discovered himself a poet, tried to make a living as a literator, partly by editing literary works of others, partly also by the production of commissioned poems.

For most authors, however, writing verse was an honorable way to spend one's leisure time. This holds also for a very successful writer like Jacob Cats. His works were printed in numbers that would still be attractive to many a modern Dutch writer. Still, there is no indication whatsoever that Cats ever made money by writing poetry. This would probably not have been considered honorable for a man in his position. The same point of view is still taken at the end of the eighteenth century by the lawyer-poet Bilderdijk. Even when badly in need of money after his exile because of political troubles during the Batavian Revolution, he considered it incompatible with his position as a consultant for the Prince of Orange to let himself be paid for his poetry.

Neither did playwrights receive money for their plays. The profits made on the Amsterdam stage went, as pointed out earlier, to charities. Incidentally a poor writer might be given a hand-out — something known to have happened, for example, to Thomas Asselijn when he was in straitened circumstances after his bankruptcy. In the seventies, *Nil volentibus arduum* started a discussion on the topic of payment for plays. The underlying idea was that only by giving specific commissions to artists of established experience and judgment, might the standard of stage productions be raised. The reaction by one of the playwrights is significant. Joan Dullaart, surely not a rich man since he referred to himself as “trading with scorned and lowly folk all the time”, rejected the proposal with indignation: it should be enough to be rewarded with the double honor of bringing profit to the poor while bolstering one's own reputation (Pels 1978, 98-99). The case seems to show that the matter of payment cannot be related, at least not exclusively, to the social position of the poets. It probably has more to do with the views on the value

of the poetic calling itself. Since the literators set themselves up as leaders of public opinion, blessed with special talents and guided by divine inspiration, their work could not be bought, and certainly not in the private sector. To be honored by the authorities was another matter, at least if this was not to be considered as real payment but only as a token of appreciation for the work of an important artist.

Otium vs. negotium

How now did all these amateurs find the time for their sometimes rather voluminous works? The answers differ, of course, depending on the situation. For Constantijn Huygens, the opposition *otium-negotium* actually seems to be almost the central theme of his literary production. The titles of his printed works notify the reader that they were written in leisure time. The first book, of 1625, was called *Otia, of ledige uren* (Otia, or leisure hours). His collected works, published in 1658, received the title *Korenbloemen* (Cornflowers), with, of course, the implication that the corn is of central importance, and the cornflower only a pleasing side-effect. His real occupation is, so he explains, to serve his country as a high official, but still, in his leisure hours he wants to be useful too. The country should, in his eyes, be served as well by the advancement of literature. And so he wrote, as a true workaholic, in every spare minute, whether feverish in bed, travelling on horseback, or even on the battlefield.

Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft shows a different reaction to the fact that he did not make literature his main business. He tends to classify himself as a dabbler: "I am no writer, although I sometimes wrote a poem for my own pleasure, that to my distress found its way to the general public. I know my imperfection so well that I cannot guarantee my poems success even with those of a favorable disposition, nor safety from scoffers" (Ick en ben geen schrijver: al heb ick somtijts ijert om de geneuchte gedicht, dat tot mijn becommerring onder de gemeente geraeckt is. ick ken mijn onvolmaecktheit soo wel, dat ick haer noch bij vroomen jonst, noch bij spotters vajlicheidt kan versekeren) (Hooft I 1976, 124). This is a statement made in a letter to Heinsius in 1610, when he was already a well-known and admired poet. Twenty years later, the tenor has hardly changed. In February 1630 he sends a copy of his poem 'Hollandsche groet' (Greeting from Holland), an ode to the prince of Orange on the occasion of the capture of 's-Hertogenbosch, to his friend Maria Tesselschade (Hooft 1899, 281). It is an ambitious, long poem of 270 lines but Hooft treats it deprecatingly. The reader must not be surprised by the lack of quality because "I never devoted all my time to writing verse, as one nigh on should do if wanting to attain perfection" (...dat ick noit mijn heele werk maeckte

van dichten, gelijk schier dient te doen, die nae de volmaektheit tracht) (Hooft I 1976, 778). A lavish shot of conventional modesty may be presumed but on the other hand Hooft is known to have been critical of his own work. It is obvious, however, that to contemporaries his self-deprecation had nothing to do with reality. For friend and foe alike, Hooft was the undisputed leader in the field of literature, and as his name means 'head', the pun "Hooft is the 'hoofd' of the Dutch poets" is tirelessly repeated. As to the poem in question, the 'Hollandsche groet', Huygens' reaction may suffice: "It is, in one word, a glorious poem" ('Tis, in een woord, een glorieux Gedicht) (Hooft I 1976, 781).

Vondel's contemporaneous biographer Geraardt Brandt devotes quite some space to the friction between the business obligations of the author and the free time he needed for his writing. Little wonder in the case of a man like Vondel who produced a body of work that was qualitatively important as well as voluminous. He wrote 33 tragedies, some of them translations from Greek or Latin, a Christian epos on John the Baptist, extensive theological didactic poems, a collection of emblems and one of fables, a volume of Christian *Heroides*, a number of formal and not so formal verse satires, a complete translation of the works of Vergil and Horace as well as of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and a large number of lyrical poems. Brandt wants to convey that Vondel was not very interested in the silk fabric business. After having related that the poet found himself a wife, he continues: "Together with this woman, a firm and intelligent manageress of the household, he started a hosiery shop. But his interest lay elsewhere, in writing verse, so that he left the buying and selling to his wife, while she left him to his artistic inclinations. Thus, he indulged most industriously in the practice of poetry." (Met deeze vrouwe, een kloeke en verstandige huishoudster, nam hy de kousneering by der hant: maar zyn gedachten liepen op wat anders, op het dichten, zoo dat hy 't koopen en verkoopen op zyn ega liet staan, en zy hem zyn drift volgen) (Brandt 1932, 9). And in another instance the biographer portrays Vondel upstairs, writing, while his wife calls out to him the latest news items from below.

Thus, Brandt seems to shape the practice to the theory. In the introduction to his biography he had already stated that the poetical spirit and the corresponding scholarship requires leisure time and a financially independent position. "Because — as the quotation goes — art requires the whole man" (Want de kunst vereischt een geheel man) (Brandt 1932, 2). It may be assumed with good reason that Brandt paints a misleading picture of the actual situation. In fact, Vondel was an active business man, as is evident, for instance, from a business trip to Scandinavia. But Brandt wants to convey the impression that Holland has done the great poet wrong. He was scantily honored and rewarded for his work and his later position at the loan office may have been well-intentioned but must be considered an insult to the artist. He should have been made fully free of worldly cares in order to serve Art.

Others take quite the opposite view of the relation between work and leisure time. Six van Chandelier indicates now and then that to him business comes first and that he cannot always spare time for his literary hobbies. To exemplify this, he published a number of unfinished poems — in self-mockery claiming to be sorry that he could find no time for their completion. A similar point is made by doctor Focquenbroch. He, too, had to make the most of his time and is outright cynical, both towards his patients and towards poetry when he mockingly states in an epithalamium that the sick shall have to wait some fifteen minutes, which he needs to write his doggerel (Focquenbroch s.d., 50).

It is of course no coincidence that in fact these two poets are rather skeptical about the whole business of poetry. They are not writing for eternity, nor do they expect inspiration from above, nor do they consider themselves chosen educators of the people. They rhyme simply for their own pleasure, so they state, and if people should use the printed sheets for toilet paper, they would not be astonished. Such statements should of course be taken with a grain of salt, but still they indicate a well-defined resistance against the high-flown claims of some of their colleagues.

Jan Vos, on the other hand, approaches the problem in a serious way when answering a disgruntled reader:

You rhyme, o Vos, you say, much less than we desire.
 Provider I must be, my fancy is restrained.
 Poetry without doubt does the whole man require;
 I am no more than half, by duty I'm enchained.
 Another may let art put bay leaves 'round his head,
 It's not with laurel wreaths that stomachs may be fed.

Gy dicht, o Vos!, zegt gy, zoo veel niet als wy wenschen.
 De huisplicht bindt myn handt. myn lust wordt wet gestelt.
 De Dichtkunst, dit staat vast, eist niet dan heele menschen:
 Ik ben niet meer dan half. de zorg doet my geweldt.
 Een ander laat zich 't hooft, door kunst, met lauwren sieren.
 De buik verzaadt zich niet door kransen van lauwrieren.

(Vos 1662, 453)

The poor hack-writers of the early eighteenth century, like Wellekens and Poot, never stop complaining. They complain about lack of money and especially of a generous mecenate that would enable them to devote themselves wholly to really important poetry. Being obliged to turn out the same well-worn clichés over and over again is a cause of bitterness because it keeps them from their high calling.



9. Salomon de Bray, *Three visitors in a bookshop*.

The audience

It would be enlightening if we were also able to define socially the consumers of literature. However, about them much less is known. Inventories of libraries are usually limited to what the literary elite possessed, and even so they hardly ever go beyond global statements on the number and the size of the books encountered. Sales catalogues offer more information but then we find that Dutch-language literary work is underrepresented there: the usually slim volumes were not deemed worth the trouble of entering in a catalog.

In anticipation of further research in this field, which has attracted much interest in recent times, we shall have to limit ourselves to some general statements on the basic problem of the relationship between the social position of the audience and their reading. In the cities, the municipal officials were as such more or less the regular patrons and one would presume they were also readers. The patricians also acted as patrons, but then in a more private capacity, whenever they asked poets to sing important events in their families. This kind of poetry was written very often indeed. Particularly in the second half of the century many volumes of poetry contained large sections of birthday poems, wedding poems, and funerary poems. The readers of such verse we shall have to seek in the first place among the guests that were present at the event. In principle, the significance of poems like these was limited to the occasion that had called them into being, but

from the fact that they were included in the numerous anthologies instigated by printers and publishers, one may conclude that the texts were also appreciated by a wider audience for their topical or even poetical value. Accordingly, authors were pleased to take them up in their own collected works as well. The other kind of occasional poetry, that in which poets commented directly on matters of local or national importance, aimed as such for a broader audience: the interested citizen who bought such pamphlets from sheet vendors for a few pennies.

It is much more difficult to find answers to the question of who were the buyers of volumes of poetry. With a few exceptions there are no accurate data on the number of copies printed. The editions will have been rather limited, one may presume. In some cases it is plausible that the author wrote in the first place for a small audience, a slightly extended circle of friends. Such an author is Huygens. Most copies of his Latin collection of poems *Momenta desultoria* were provided with handwritten dedications in the form of small poems. In the second edition all these little poems were again included, this time printed together with the corresponding letters-of-thanks. This, of course, points towards a close-knit and limited audience.

At the other end of the scale stands Cats. This poet worked consciously with a view to a very large audience. His topics were educational, his style was simple and his instructions were interspersed with interesting tales and anecdotes. In order to make them even more attractive, the books were richly illustrated. Any average literate Dutchman could understand and enjoy them. But the intellectuals were catered for, too, because Cats surrounded his Dutch texts with a wide array of scholarly wisdom in Latin and modern foreign languages. Of some books the printer, obviously pleased, mentions the numbers of copies sold: *Houwelyck* (Marriage) 50.000 copies; the emblematical book of proverbs *Spiegel van den ouden ende nieuwen tijdt* (Mirror of the old and new times) 25.000; *Trou-ringh* (Wedding-ring) even more; and the same holds for other works (Cats 1712 I fol.**). In 1700, 1712 and again in 1726 folio-editions of his collected works appeared in two volumes. Characteristic for his wide popularity was the appearance on the market of expensive as well as cheap editions at the same time. Cats' works were to be found, therefore, in any Dutch drawing room, and even though it may not have pleased everybody, in many ways "Father Cats" is really the embodiment of Dutch Christian bourgeois culture.

Vondel occupies a place somewhere between Cats and Huygens. The major part of his lyrical production consists of occasional poetry, verses on his own family, friends and patrons, but also poems on local and national events. Whenever something of importance occurred, whether it was the erection of a town hall or a marine storage depot, the conclusion of a peace treaty, or a victory over the British, Vondel was always ready to write an erudite and dignified poem.

He waited long before publishing his first collective volume. The book, *Verscheide gedichten*, appeared in 1644, when he was already far into his fifties. But it evidently attracted attention. A second volume, curiously enough edited by political and religious enemies of the poet and provided with an insulting preface, appeared in 1647. An extended collection of the poems that Vondel recognized as his own was then published under his own supervision in 1650. Reprints follow, until the monumental and definitive edition by his biographer Geraardt Brandt, published in two volumes in 1682. Interest for his works undoubtedly existed among the persons more or less directly involved, but there obviously was also a wider circle of readers. Not only the events, but also the way they were sung by the poet, attracted attention. Vondel increasingly became the model for the way in which Dutch poetry was supposed to be written. His imitators were legion and already during his life-time he became a classic.

Unlike Vondel, a number of whose readers may be presumed to have been lovers of belles lettres, the Protestant ministers aimed at a specific audience with their poetry, especially when writing sacred songs. Such songs were meant for use in meetings. The devotional poetry by Camphuysen, Lodensteyn and Sluiter was reprinted with great regularity, sometimes far into the nineteenth century. Jacobus Revius, also a minister, was a different case, however. His poetry of a higher intellectual level and a more intricate form aimed at an elite audience and accordingly did not sell well. For a so-called second edition the sheets of the first edition were used and provided with a new title-page.

Presumably less bound to authors and genres is the interest in songbooks and emblem books. There is ample evidence that they were intended for a youthful audience. The subject treated is love. The poets dedicated them for instance to “the youthful little singers”, or “the damsels of Holland”. Sometimes the booklets had one of the initial pages executed with a cartouche where the name of the beloved might be entered. In some of the emblem books the subscriptions were printed in several languages, which, of course, indicates an international public, such as the student body of Leyden. Such carefully illustrated and well-executed books point to a young, educated audience with — of primary interest to the printers — sufficient purchasing power. Also meant for the Leyden student audience was a small — slightly pornographic — polyglot volume, called *Incogniti scriptoris nova poemata* (New poems by an unknown author), in the subtitle clarified as “new Dutch poems and riddles”. One reads a seemingly scabrous text and is invited to guess the subject. The solution given is a highly innocent one: the girl in question was playing the lute or enjoying a candy bar. The booklet was rather successful: the oldest copy known is from the third edition (1624) and we know it was still being reprinted in 1634 and 1642.

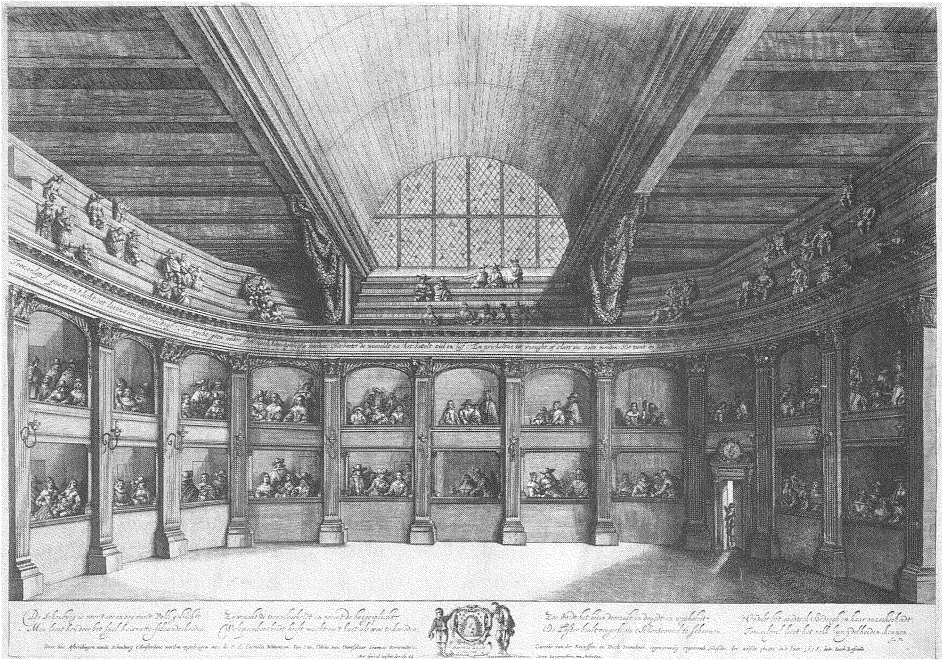
Songbooks, however, catered for a much wider audience. During the seventeenth century a host of cheap songbooks appeared in almost every part of the Netherlands: the *Hoorn* songbook, the *Haarlem* lark, the *Brabant* nightingale or the *Maassluis* pastime, to name but a few. This type of book must have been extremely popular and very well sold.

For entertainment, people read chapbooks, prose renderings of old, medieval stories and, of course, the modern romances and collections of stories from Spain and France. Who read these books? Of the chapbooks we know that they were used in schools, certainly in the beginning of the seventeenth century. These texts, originally meant for adults, had then slid down to children's level. Anyone who wanted to be counted a literary adult, could not come forward with such stories, at least later in the century. When Focquenbroch, in self-mockery, recommends his epic parody *Typhon*, he supposes that particularly chapbook readers will be pleased by it and he proceeds to list several titles: anyone who likes *Floris ende Blanchefleur*, or *Orson en Valentijn*, will certainly also enjoy my poem (Focquenbroch 1978, 39). The fact that such books appeared in cheap editions indicates a large market in the lower ranges of society. A copy of (the Dutch or French version of) *Amadis de Gaule*, however, together with a number of other instructive books, was kept out of the sale of the important book collection of Daniel van der Meulen, because the book had to serve in the humanistic education of the eleven-year-old son. These novels of chivalry were also much read, though by a more restricted public, and were apparently considered of sufficiently high level. This may be deduced also from the fact that episodes from such books were readily adapted for the stage.

Theater-going public

Also with regard to this group of consumers of literature data are scanty. In the first few decades of the seventeenth century performances were for the greater part linked to the Chambers of Rhetoric. The audience consisted of the members and their appendages, but also of common Amsterdam people. In Bredero's *Moortje* one of the characters suggests going to the 'hall' to see the rhetoricians performing. Another does not want to go because they play too stiffly for his taste: he prefers the less formal style of the English comedians (Bredero 1984, 234).

A great fire in 1776 destroyed the major part of the archives of the Amsterdam Theater. As a result, an accurate reconstruction of the composition of the public has become impossible. We do know how the seats were arranged according to rank and class and how they were priced. Often the total takings of an even-



10. Salomon Savery, *Interior of the Amsterdam Theatre on the Keizersgracht, with view on the spectators*, 1658.

ing are known, but it is impossible to ascertain whether the amount is mainly due to the more expensive seats or to the cheap ones.

There are many indications that behavior in the theater left much to be desired. Throwing of nutshells is mentioned as a normal activity, for instance in 1649 by Lambert van den Bosch, and official posters warn against this and similar objectionable behavior. It is hardly possible to attribute such behavior to one particular social stratum, however readily reformers of the stage may reproach their opponents that they want to please the rabble in particular. Misbehavior may, of course, just as well or better be connected with age. The contents of the plays hardly give clues as to the intended audience. A tragedy was always followed by a farce and the question of who came in at what time and for which play is impossible to determine. Generally speaking, though, the Amsterdam performances seem to have drawn a rather wide audience. A visit to the Theater was often programmed for distinguished foreign visitors. On the other hand, even from the eighteenth century there is evidence that very primitive emotions of identification were evoked by tragedies. One may guess that it was a public with

little artistic training which identified with the hero to the point of threatening his opponent with a beating up.

The overall picture is that of a lively literary community taking a well-defined place in public life and reaching large sections of the population. Literature is well ensconced in bourgeois society. There is hardly any trace of a literary underground. Dutch authors do not tend to get murdered in bars or be persecuted as dangerous libertines. The practice of poetry is, indeed, something of which even highly placed officials are not ashamed.

Writers operated in principle within the limits set by the authorities. They did not have to be uncritical, but a subversive, let alone a revolutionary role, is out of the question. Their voices were very attentively listened to by society, or so it would appear: people were willing to pay for the relatively expensive broadsheets on which were printed the poet's views on events in city or country. Even a private citizen's course of life from the cradle to the grave was often accompanied by poetry.

Literature was taken seriously but this does not mean there was no room for fun. Both Hooft and Huygens wrote a comedy. Huygens' *Trijntje Cornelis* was, indeed, on a risqué subject: the adventures of a bargeman's wife in the red-light districts of Antwerp; and that Calvinist also published very libertine epigrams. Light-hearted love lyrics were written by almost all authors. The (anti)-petrarcist game was played here, too, with gusto. Scabrous songs are not hard to find in many songbooks and some of the farces that were performed on the stage of the official Theater were extremely coarse. But all this would seem to be only the fringe of an orderly literary life. In principle, the common goal is the defense of Christian-humanist standards, in the service of one's country.

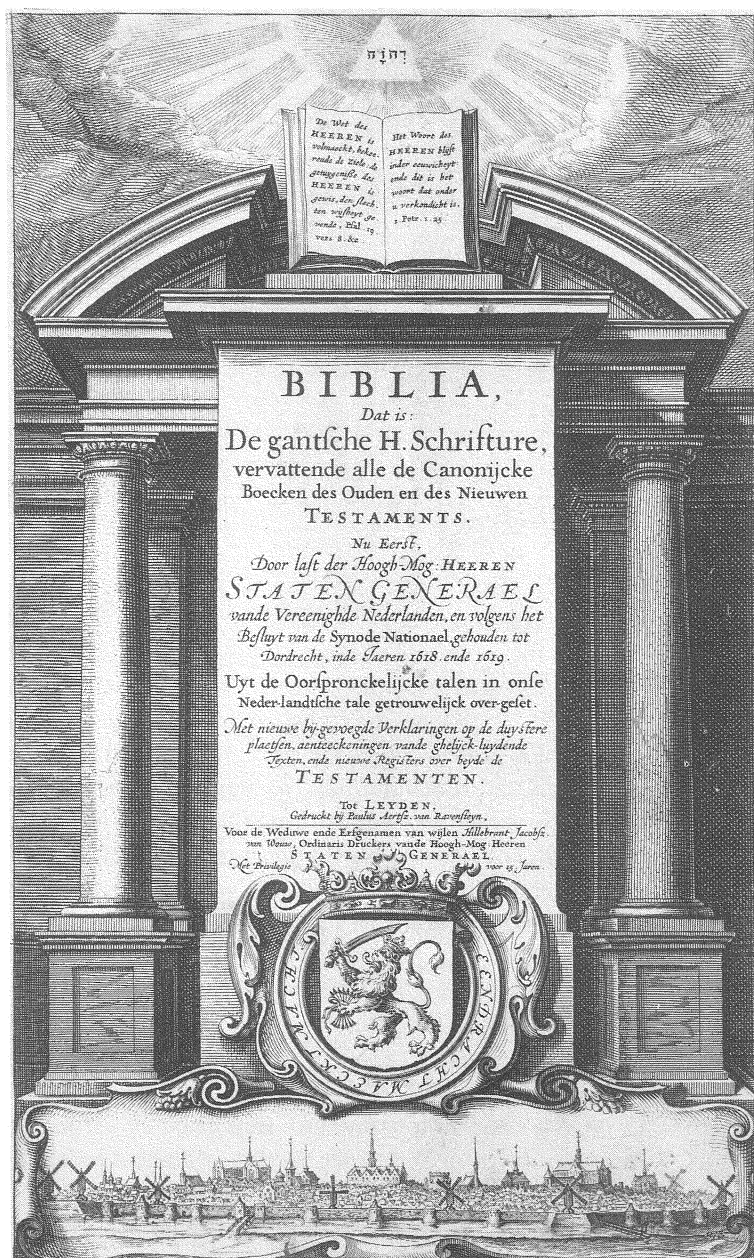
II

Poetry and religion



During the siege of Leyden by Spanish troops in 1574, the burgomasters of the city issued emergency money carrying the inscription: *Haec libertatis ergo*, thus indicating what they considered to be the deepest motive for the struggle against the Spanish oppression. From his pulpit, a preacher voiced strong opposition, stating that the inscription should have read: *Haec religionis ergo*: not for the sake of (civil) liberty, but in defence of the true Protestant faith the war was being waged. As the story has it, the town-secretary and poet Jan van Hout became so outraged by this behavior that he grabbed his pistol and offered the burgomaster: "Shall I shoot him out of there?" The example illustrates how closely politics and religion were intertwined and it also shows, albeit rather incidentally, how strongly poets were interested in these questions.

Few people now agree with the Calvinist claim that the revolt against Spain was exclusively, or even first and foremost, based on religious motives. However, there can be no doubt that in the first years of the war the religious controversy strongly affected the hearts of the people and thereby public opinion. And also later in the history of the Republic, religion remained an important factor in the struggle against Spain. This is hardly surprising since in the Golden Age many Dutch citizens had relatives who had been exiled, had lost possessions or even had died because of their religious convictions. As mentioned above, it had been the refugees from the Southern Netherlands who had formed the nuclei of the Protes-



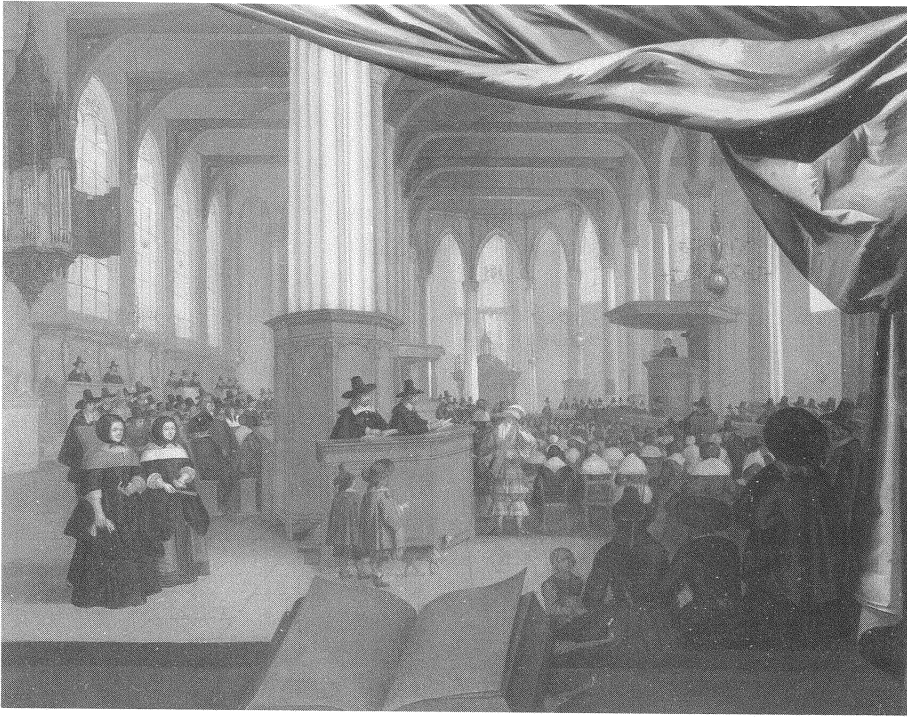
11. Frontispiece of *Biblia, Dat is De gantsche H. Schrifture ...* Leiden 1637.
The 'Statenbijbel'.

tant communities in the North. People thought about religion and meditated upon existential questions in the light of Scripture. There are indications that even rather esoteric discussions on theological subjects were held by “the man in the street”, leading to much head-shaking by the intelligentsia, who were of the opinion that ordinary people should not worry about these abstruse problems. Bredero, in his preface to the *Spaanschen Brabander* (1618), answered the imputation that the whores in his play talked too openly of carnal subjects, with the argument that such a topic was actually less dangerous than an all too penetrating study of the Bible, when people “with their so-called supernatural insight could imperil both lands and people” (met over-natuurlijck verstant, Landen en Luyden in de Waach-schale stellen) (Bredero 1974, 135). This refers, of course, to the disputes between two Calvinist factions, the Remonstrants and the Counter-remonstrants, during the Twelve Years’ Truce, which almost led to civil war.

Many citizens were, indeed, able to take part in the discussions. In Protestant circles, the Bible was the most read book. In the first decades of the seventeenth century the Protestant Bible in general use was the so-called *Deux Aes Bible*, a Dutch translation of Luther’s German Bible. At the Dordt Synod (1618-1619) it was decided that a new translation based on the original Hebrew and Greek texts was called for. A team of scholars worked on this project for almost twenty years and in 1637 the first *Statenbijbel* (States Bible) came from the press. It derived its name from the fact that the actual commissioning as well as the financing had been done by the States General. Even if the States General had done nothing else for literature, they would still have to be mentioned as important patrons on account of that commission alone. This translation of the Bible had a profound effect on the language and culture of the Dutch throughout the following centuries. In many families it was customary to read from the Bible at mealtimes. In addition, people attended church twice on Sundays and often went to a third service on an ordinary weekday, listening each time to a sermon with rich exegetical detail. It is not surprising, therefore, that the “language of Canaan” became, as it were, the second language of many people and that theology was a favorite pursuit of many non-theologians.

It is necessary, however, to interpret such data very carefully. Misunderstandings may easily rise. Even well-informed Dutchmen of our times are surprised to learn that around 1650 almost half the population of the Republic belonged to the Roman Catholic Church. Was that the result of a war of liberation, waged partly for religious reasons? What about the proverbial Calvinist image of the Netherlands?

A peculiar contrast existed between the numerical proportions and the distribution of power. Whereas the Calvinists did not represent the majority of the people, they did form the largest group of Protestants. The Reformed Church,



12. Unknown artist of the Amsterdam school, *Interior of the Nieuwe Zijdskapel at Amsterdam*, ca. 1658.

although not the officially established church, was indeed the dominant one. Only those who belonged to this church, were eligible for important offices. The other churches were tolerated with greater or lesser forbearance. Catholics were not allowed to practice their religion publicly, but usually could hold services in conventicles. For the non-Calvinist Protestant groups, the situation was more favorable, their congregations being allowed to meet in their own church buildings. Calvinism, therefore, was represented in society as a whole — and the same goes for the literary life — to a larger extent than one would expect from its numerical strength, or from the situation in the last decades of the sixteenth century.

The sixteenth century

In order to understand to what degree and in what manner religious literature functioned in the Golden Age, one should examine its role during the first years

of the Revolt. In the process of the Reformation, literature had a central function in the forming of public opinion. Plays written and executed in the Chambers of Rhetoric dealt with theological issues like the question: "What affords the greatest comfort to man at the moment of death", the central theme at the 'Landjuweel', the great rhetorician's festival in Ghent (1539). It was in the Chambers of Rhetoric that the great discussions, in the vernacular, were held between the Catholics, Calvinists and especially the large group of Christians who stressed piety in the Erasmian vein more than dogmatics.

A still wider distribution than the *Rederijkers* plays which were after all rather difficult and aimed at an elitist public, was enjoyed by the many songs: martyr songs, resistance songs with religious overtones, Bible songs. These were distributed on loose sheets, but also collected in volumes that often were reprinted until far into the seventeenth century. A well-known example is the volume *Veelderhande liedekens* (Miscellaneous songs), printed around 1550. This book contains much Mennonite material and mirrors the ideals of this pious group that preferred to turn away from the wicked world to find mutual edification in their own familiar circle. The Mennonites were of prime importance for the development of religious popular literature. They were the first to receive the blows of religious persecution and their voice of patient protest set the tone.

When the Calvinist branch of the Reformation began to cast roots somewhat later, the adherents of this group at first freely made use of the Mennonite songbooks. But soon the dogmatically well-trained Calvinists objected to various elements in the Mennonite literature. They resolved the problem by removing the songs that were considered to contain dogmatic errors, with the result that beside the *Veelderhande liedekens*, a reformed version saw the light (first edition 1558), the *Veelderhande gheestelicke liedekens* (Miscellaneous sacred songs). But as time progressed the Calvinists distanced themselves more and more from the sacred song. In their services hymns had no place. As a matter of principle, they only wished to sing Psalms, the very songs that had been given to the chosen people by the Holy Spirit. Compared to these, common hymns are just man's handiwork and as such liable to fallacies. What could not be sung in church, subsequently lost its value for family and personal use as well.

The creation of a rhymed version of the Psalms was a task to which many Calvinist poets applied themselves with utmost care. The version introduced in the churches, was that prepared by the Rev. Pieter Datheen, based on the French version by Marot and De Bèze. This translation, dating from 1566, had been a rushed job and soon was out of fashion — from a literary point of view — because it did not use the formal principles of Dutch iambic verse, but those of the free-accentuated French verse. The congregations soon became attached to this version but it was scorned by the poets, with the result that a whole series of new rhymed ver-

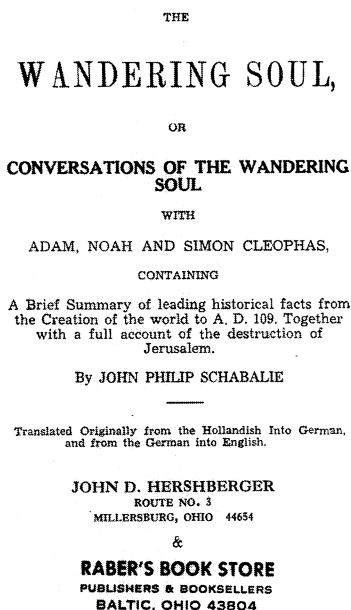


13. Pieter Saenredam, *Interior of St. Bavo's church, called the 'Grote Kerk', at Haarlem, 1648.*

sions appeared: by Marnix van St. Aldegonde, by Revius, by Jan de Brune and Jan Six van Chandelier, to list only a few. It was not until 1773, however, that a new version replaced Datheen's in the Reformed Church.

The function of sacred literature

Hymns appear to have functioned in various ways. In the initial years of the Revolt they very likely provided encouragement to the somewhat loosely organized groups of believers in their struggle and suffering. As soon as congregations were formed, hymns started to function within them. The Mennonites always made room for this functioning in their services. Besides, hymns found a place in smaller, less official meetings and also in the personal life of the individual believer. Some songs, indeed, appear to have been written for reading rather than for community singing. In Mennonite circles new hymnbooks continued to appear that were to remain popular for a long time. Also meditational prose was widely read. The *Lusthof des gemoets* (The heart's paradise) by J.Ph. Schabaelje of 1635 enjoyed many reprints and parts of it were translated into German and English. Even now it is still in use in some American churchcommunities, as shown by the fact that a nineteenth century translation under the title of *The wandering soul* was recently (1981) printed in an edition of 3000 copies in Baltic, Ohio.



14. Title-page of a recent edition of the American translation of J.Ph. Schabaelje, *The wandering soul*, ca. 1981.

As we have seen, hymns soon lost their functionality for the Calvinists. However, there was another impulse that went out from Calvinism and this would become of the greatest importance to the future of religious verse: bringing everyday life under the sway of religion. It was particularly Calvinist authors who wrote the so-called *Geuzenliedboeken* (Beggar's song books). Those books contained songs referring to events in the Eighty Years' War, battles, sieges etc. Although not Bible songs in the strict sense, these poems viewed events from a biblical perspective. It was this propaganda, which interpreted all political events from the religious point of view of the Reformed Church, that very strongly confirmed the notion that the Revolt was totally a Calvinist matter.

Individualization

The writers of the indicated types of religious lyrics: Bible songs, martyr songs and *Geuzenliederen*, hardly had "literature" in mind. There were no efforts to achieve an aesthetically perfect form. Understandability to fellow believers came first. Another type of religious literature arose, however, with a different aim, from a different background and with a different audience.

The ambitious literary innovator Jan van der Noot, patrician of Antwerp, wrote a sequence of sonnets on the downfall of Rome in imitation of Du Bellay. In a case like this there is a smooth transition between the literature for common use and the more literary-scholarly type. In his early years Jan van der Noot had been a fervent Calvinist who actually was exiled from Antwerp for having taken part in an insurgence. His book *Theatre*, in which the sonnets on Rome are found, was therefore printed in London (1568). According to the preface, the collection was meant to offer support and comfort to his fellow exiles. This would only have been possible, one must fear, for people with a wide interest in literature. For those without much schooling, the allegorical sonnets can hardly have been intelligible. Maybe for this reason the sequence is followed by an extensive commentary in prose, which actually makes far from simple reading itself. In any case, it is obvious that Van der Noot was at least as interested in the challenge of providing an adequate literary imitation of Du Bellay's sonnets as in comforting and encouraging the London emigres.

Evidently a religious literature is arising which no longer has the prime function of edifying fellow believers, but which tries to express the main truths of Christianity in an adequate literary manner for an appreciative audience. This audience is not primarily approached as a group, either, but rather as a collection of individuals. The other side of the picture is, of course, that the poet does not operate in the first place as the representative of a group, but rather speaks only

for himself. This phenomenon may be illustrated, for example, by the religious poems of the Amsterdam author Gerbrand Adriaensz. Bredero, that were collected under the heading 'Aendachtigh Liedt-boeck' (Devotional songbook) in his *Groot Lied-boeck* (1622), published posthumously. Typical for these poems is the fact that the poet addresses himself frequently by his own name:

Garbrande, is it that you wish to live in peace?
Then love the loving God, for love's sake, without cease.

Garbrande, wilt ghy leven recht gerust?
So liefst uyt liefd' den lieven God met lust.

(Bredero 1975, 521)

This may be understood as a signal that these religious poems, written by an individual, were intended for individual readers rather than for a group, though the texts were still provided with indications of the tune.

The outlines as sketched for the early years of the Revolt remain visible throughout the seventeenth century. While in the various church communities of the Golden Age the group-linked religious poetry continued to play an important part, the main route was to become that which Van der Noot had taken with his religious poetry of high literary standing. The Calvinist literary elite was able to appreciate how the new forms of sonnet, epigram and ode were also made suitable for subject matter of a religious nature. This type of poetry in its turn created new types of subject matter: it made room, for instance, for meditative verse that could be savored by the reader in the quiet of his own home.

The modern religious poetry conquered much ground. Almost every volume of verse contains poems inspired by the Christian faith. Sometimes they were brought together in a special section. A tripartition as offered in Bredero's songbook was not uncommon. The first part of the book then contained the amorous texts, the second dealt with civil-ethical matters, and the third part covered religious themes. Although not applying this particular tripartition, Huygens did collect a section of 'Bibel-stoff' (Bible-matter) in his *Otia*, his first large volume, published in 1625. But religious verse could have a place in a book without being confined to a separate place. Actually, one might consider it a Calvinist principle not to make too strict a division between Christian and other poetry, since one's whole life is subjected to divine ordination. In the motley collection of Six van Chandelier's poems, with its classical *silva*-like structure, one finds a poem on the delicious oysters of Colchester immediately followed by one on "The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom". Any thought of the edification of a group is completely lacking. These are utterances in poetry by a man who is convinced that anything in his life is a suitable subject for poetry, including the religious part, which for this Reformed merchant is of great importance, indeed. But he writes

out of himself, of his own needs, and his own experience, and the audience he primarily had in mind seems to have been a rather small group of intimates.

On the other hand, collections were published that as a whole had a definitely Christian character. Huygens, for instance, had a volume printed in 1645, entitled *Heilighe daghen* (Holy days). It contained a series of poems on the Protestant holy days concluded by a poem on the Lord's supper. The function of this booklet is apparent from a Latin letter by Barlaeus to the author. The poems have "been printed in the form in which you wrote them, so that the separate titles might be hung side by side, and each in its turn might be pinned to the wall and be read" (Huygens 1974, 6). Obviously, these poems were meant for private meditation. The same may be supposed for a genre practiced in this period by many poets from different backgrounds, the writing of lyrical narrative poems dealing with the Passion. In these poems, the emotions of the reader are especially aroused by a penetrating description of the sufferings of Christ. To the description is added an application to the life of the believers. This chiefly Protestant poetry of meditation has a less fixed structure than its Jesuit-inspired Catholic counterpart but was intended to fulfill a comparable function for its lay readers.

Conquest vs. puritanical avoidance

The *Groot Lied-boeck* by Bredero contains, as mentioned, meditative poetry with a personal touch. It is interesting to note, moreover, that the book also includes several epithalamic poems, written completely in a Christian spirit, although following the classically oriented models for this type of occasional poetry as regards design and implementation. In the new Protestant society a need had apparently arisen for a high-level literature, in which the Christian truths that had been won with so much fervor in the past could now be given adequate form. This brings to mind that Protestant poetry not only had to battle against the Roman Catholic opponent, but also had to rival the classical-humanist ideas and forms. This second battle had far-reaching importance for religious poetry in the seventeenth century. Discussions on points related to this controversy flare up continually. There is, for instance, a recurrent opposition to the use of mythological names and images.

A whole body of thought dating from the Church Fathers received a new actuality. In 1632, the Calvinist preacher Jacobus Revius published his voluminous collection *Over-ysselsche sangen en dichten* (Overijssel songs and poems). Revius was strongly inspired by the French Calvinist tradition. He, too, wanted to put literature in the service of the Kingdom of God. His book falls into two parts. In the second part one finds miscellaneous poems: poems in the tradition of the

Beggar's song books, in which Revius celebrates recent victories over the Spanish enemy, but also occasional poems for an intimate circle, all in conformity with the Calvinist aim of orienting life completely towards God. In the first part, the more important one, he offers a very extensive series of poems, all directly inspired by the Bible. They are put in a thematic-chronological order, from the Creation to the Last Judgment. The first poem in the collection is called 'Praise of God' and expresses the Calvinist principle that all of life serves to glorify the name of God. This principle is emphatically applied by Revius to poetry, too:

Were I a nightingale, I'd worship my Creator
 And all my life I'd sing and make his glory greater.
 [...]
 But I'm no nightingale, mine is a higher place:
 The image of the Lord, I'm of the human race.
 So I will let my voice reach out to every man
 And praise God high and far, as loudly as I can.
 [...]
 Assured that He, who is beyond all time and place
 Did make my tongue and lips fit solely to His praise.

Waer ick een nachtegael, ick wou mijn Schepper eeren
 Met sijnen grooten lof altijt te quintileren
 [...]
 K'en ben geen nachtegael, maer in veel grooter eere
 Een mensch, het even-beelt van aller Heeren Heere:
 Ick wil dan mijne stem doen hooren alle man
 En prijsen hem soo hooch en verre als ick kan
 [...]
 Versekeret dat hy die eeuwichlijcken leeft
 Mijn tong' tot sijnen roem alleen geschapen heeft.

(Revius 1930, 9)

For that praise of God Revius uses the then modern forms of poetry, the ode, the sonnet, the epigram. This is a conscious effort, and as a poet he is proud of his achievement, drawing attention, for instance, although erroneously, to the fact that he is the first author to use the Pindaric ode in the Netherlands. Another striking feature is that he sometimes imitates profane poetry, even that by contemporaries like Hooft, in a Christianizing manner.

The justification of these and other procedures, all amounting to a Christianizing annexation of classical-humanist material, is given in his poem 'Heydens houwelijck' (Marrying a pagan), in which he follows the exegesis of *Deut.* 21:11 by Church Fathers like Origen and Jerome.

Whoever in the war had caught a woman fair
 Wife to some infidel, that he would fain retain,
 Had to pare short her nails, cut off all of her hair,
 Then alter her attire and wed her only then.
 O poets, if you want to enjoy in the arms
 Of a Pierian muse, her Greek and Roman charms,
 Pare off all that she has of sumptuous wantonness,
 Of dull idolatry and subtle scornfulness.
 Embrace her only then, she 'll bear you children fast
 That through all ages shall cause your renown to last.

Soo wie een schone vrou van grieck of ander heyden
 Vinck inden oorloch, en daer van niet wilde scheyden
 Haer nagels corten most, afsnyden al haer haar,
 Veranderen haer cleet, en trouwense daer naer:
 O dichters, wildy u vermaken inde minne
 Vande Romeynsche of de griecsche Piërinne
 Snoeyt af al watse heeft van weytsche dertelheyt,
 Van domme afgody, en spitse schamperheyt,
 Omhelsetse daer na, sy sal u kinders geven
 Die u gedachtenis in eeuwichheyt doen leven.

(Revius 1930, 77)

With his choice for this type of poetry, limited in subject matter and motif, with an almost exclusively Christian orientation but setting high literary aims, Revius opted, although involuntarily, for a very limited audience. It was not this Calvinist preacher who would be able to touch the hearts of large sections of the population. That was reserved for the representatives of the 'Nadere Reformatie' (Further Reformation), the pietist wing of Dutch Calvinism — much influenced by English Puritanism — that aimed expressly at edification of the many.

The problem of Christian poetry was theoretically treated by the Utrecht professor Gijsbertus Voetius in his programmatic inaugural oration on the connection between piety and learning *De pietate cum scientia coniugenda* (1634). He deals with a wide range of arts and sciences in their relation to true piety, and poetry also appears on that list. To make his point, he uses the metaphor, derived from the Church Fathers, of the vessels of the Egyptians (*Ex.12:35*) that the Israelites were allowed to take with them at their deliverance from bondage. In the same way, pagan civilization may be used for Christian purposes. The image is similar to that used by Revius. The slightly different slant of his argument implies an important nuance, however. Revius had tried to bring modern literature with all its achievements under the authority of faith. Voetius appears to recommend puritan avoidance. His major attention is directed at the dangers that the practicing of poetry may involve for a Christian. "Ne Apollo, hoc est, genius et facultas poetica Christum vobis de pectore excutiat; ne laudata alioquin poeseos exercitatio



15. Claes Janszoon Visscher, *Family saying grace*, 1609. With *Psalm* 128 as subscription.

impediat illud, quod ante omnia commendat Apostolus. *Exerce te ad pietatem.*” (Let not Apollo, that is the innate talent for poetry, drive Christ from your heart; let the much praised practice of poetry not hinder you in doing what the apostle recommends above all things: train yourself in godliness). It is this kind of thinking that charts the course for the practice of religious poetry in Protestant circles. Voetius was one of the great leaders of the Further Reformation. Its followers viewed with great concern the developments in the Reformed Church. In their opinion, doctrine was insufficiently translated into actual life. A new ardor, directed towards real spiritual purification, was required: “*Exerce te ad pietatem*”.

In this context poetry could have its uses too. Having left the cultivation of the religious song to the Mennonite brethren in the sixteenth century, the Calvinists now realized that singing might help in bringing about a real Christianization. The point here is not to show that Christian subjects may find their place in important literature, but that literature can function as a useful servant for the spreading of the practice of piety. Thus beside the Protestant poems to be read by

a literary elite, in a second wave as it were, the Calvinist religious song arose as well. Especially the preachers promoted this development. Their aim was to keep their church members far from the dangers of the profane, frivolous song and to provide spiritual food, using the same agreeable and alluring tunes as were found in secular songbooks. Even now these pious songs were not used in the official church services. They functioned, however, in smaller groups that met on week-days for mutual edification. In this way, the old Bible songs came to life again, following as closely as possible the very words of Holy Scripture.

A typical representative of the Further Reformation was Willem Sluiter. One of his books is called *Eybergsche sang-lust* (Pleasure of singing in Eybergen) (first ed. 1670) and it is dedicated to his flock in Eybergen, a village in the culturally and economically backward eastern part of the Netherlands. The poet speaks of his “wee little talent ... to bring forth a booklet now and then”. This songbook was intended for the members of his congregation and was even distributed free to the poor. Sluiter wrote the poems especially for them and purposely kept them simple so that they would be understood and remembered by the often illiterate people of the parish. This may be deduced from the *Vreugd- en liefdesangen* (Songs of joy and love) that were added to this volume. These songs were assigned to the various hamlets that together formed the municipality of Eybergen. The congregation at Hupsel will need help to get to know the contents of the book:

Both my booklets take with thanks, then.
Should you have somebody who
Can read some of it to you,
Sit beside him on the bench, then.
Listen well, or even sing
If you've mastered such a thing.

Neemt mijn' Boekjes t'saem in dank aen,
Isser onder u een man,
Die daer uyt iet lesen kan,
Schikt u by hem op de bank aen,
En hoort toe; of singt te saem,
Zijt gy daer toe ook bequaem.

(Sluiter s.d., 27)

Using very simple language and style Sluiter expounds general Christian truths in these songs:

To know Jesus makes us rich.
In the ditch
May go all we prized before.
Thus, man first of all is taught
To seek naught
But God's Kingdom evermore.

Jesus kennen maekt ons rijk.
Schaed' en slijk
Is daer alles by te achten:
Hier door leert gy allereerst,
Elk om't zeerst,
Na Gods Koningryk te trachten.

(Sluiter s.d., 22)

No less than three Bible verses are mentioned as sources in the margin, showing the importance the Calvinist preachers attached to close adherence to the biblical text.

The little poems will have had the intended effect. Until far into the nineteenth century Sluiter's work was reprinted again and again. His songs were used by the people for whom they were meant: the faithful who sought in regular private meetings the godliness they found lacking in the official church.

However, the collection of sacred songs that became most popular in the seventeenth century did not stem from the orthodox Calvinist Further Reformation movement. It was the Remonstrant preacher Dirck Rafaelsz. Camphuysen who, after having been removed from his ministry in 1619 following the victory of orthodox Calvinism at the Dordt Synod, published a collection *Stichtelycke rymen* (Edifying rhymes) in 1624, that proved to affect the godly very deeply and over a very long period. The book ran into more than fifty editions, being reprinted until far into the eighteenth century. For Camphuysen the total sanctification of the Christian life was a central issue. God demands the perfect imitation of Christ which, because he demands it, must be possible. This amounts to a major dogmatic disagreement with the Further Reformation which did not consider sanctification to be a condition for salvation, but an inevitable consequence of divine election. On the practical level of every-day godliness, however, the orthodox let themselves be inspired by Camphuysen's clear and stylistically attractive texts. From the point of view of poetics, moreover, there was much that Camphuysen had in common with the preacher-poets. He, too, saw his work as a substitute for the wicked worldly songs, and he also rejected any form of classical mythology.

Among the Catholics, sacred songs served for the instruction and comfort of the faithful, who, if not oppressed, were still living under some pressure. From patrician stock, Jan Baptist Stalpart van der Wiele (1579-1630), chose the life of a pastor *in partibus infidelium* and settled in Delft. For his parishioners and especially for the beguines in whose home he stayed — to which community the magistrate usually turned a blind eye — he wrote many hymns, often following the course of the liturgical year, as in the book *Gulde-Jaer* (Golden year) of 1628.

Didaxis

The above-mentioned works had a clearly didactic purpose, aimed exclusively at the religious part of life. On a much larger scale Jacob Cats (1577-1660) provided a Christian didaxis. He also was involved in the Further Reformation, being strongly influenced by a man like William Perkins. In his whole life he propagated a Christian ethic, but at the same time his primary concern was a strong personal belief. His famous collection of emblems *Sinne- en minnebeelden* (Meaningful pictures and pictures on love) was divided into three parts, the first being concerned with love, the second with every-day civil life and the third with the inner-religious life. Thus each emblematic picture was thrice explained — a novelty in all Europe. Cats himself considered the third part the central one explaining that the first part was meant to serve as a bait.

His audience differed from that of Sluiter. The richly illustrated *Sinne- en minnebeelden* was an expensive book, meant for the established, well-schooled citizenry. This was also apparent from the way it was designed. Apart from the Dutch texts the book also contained poems and commentaries in Latin and French, richly larded with quotations from both ancient and modern famous writers. His Christian teachings aimed at the complete life of man: he dealt with the struggle between the spirit and the flesh, with Christian married life in all its practical details, but also with the way in which a Christian should face death.

Towards the end of the century Christian instruction by way of emblematics was to get an extensive sequel in the work of the poet-engraver Jan Luyken. In a whole series of books he presented his pietistic meditations to what was again a very wide audience by means of pictures taken from daily life, nature or the world of trades. Luyken did not belong to the established church, but moved in a non-dogmatically bound group. Jacob Böhme, the German mystic, left profound marks on his work. Luyken's popularity, however, extended far beyond the confines of the small group of his religious friends. His emblem books were reprinted well into the eighteenth century and functioned in the same circles where the songs of preachers like Sluiter were read and sung.

Joost van den Vondel (1587-1679), the Catholic convert, taught on a high theological level to a more educated audience. In his didactic poem *Altaergeheimenissen* (Secrets of the altar) of 1645, he expounded the doctrine of the eucharist and in 1662 he published the *Bespiegelingen van Godt en Godtsdienst* (Reflections on God and religion), directed against the "ongodisten" (atheists), i.e. those who did not subscribe to the Apostolic Creed. The first book was provided with a fictitious printer's address, "Te Keulen, in de Nieuwe Druckerye" (Cologne, in the New Printery). Actually, *Altaergeheimenissen* had been printed in Amsterdam. The second book, not breathing such a specific Roman Catholic

spirit, was brought out openly by Vondel's publisher Abraham de Wees in Amsterdam, seemingly without problems.

Christian discussion on and regarding the stage

In another, quite different manner, literature and religion are connected in Vondel's dramatic work. The great majority of the tragedies he wrote deal with biblical matter. All his life Vondel retained an interest in the stories of the Old Testament as a source of insight into what is really important in a Christian's life. This love for the Bible was his companion throughout all the different stages of his religious life. As a Mennonite he wrote the Rederijkers tragedy *Pascha*. Somewhat later plays, *Hierusalem verwoest* (The destruction of Jerusalem) of 1620 and *Sofompaneas* (1635), a translation of a Neo-Latin tragedy by Hugo Grotius on an episode in the life of Joseph, date from the period that he was taking leave of the Mennonite community and showing Remonstrant sympathies. But Vondel became really productive after he had found his spiritual home in the Roman Catholic faith. Between 1640 and 1667, he wrote no less than thirteen biblical dramas.

These dramas are not didactical in the sense that the spectator is offered instant religious lessons. They are rather demonstrations of great themes like the justice and wisdom of God's government and the position of man between right and wrong, between heaven and earth. The effect of these tragedies was no doubt much smaller and less direct than that of Cats' work, for instance. Paradoxically, the greatest tragic poet of the Netherlands, who devoted his whole life to the study and practice of drama, had only limited success on the Amsterdam stage. Vondel's problem, *mutatis mutandis*, was the same as that of Revius. He, too, wanted to provide a Christian emulation of classical forms and ideas. It was his ambition to make use of the achievements of classical tragedy in order to write a Christian drama of high artistic and intellectual standards. His tragedy *Jeptha*, a Christian emulation of Euripides' *Iphigenia*, he presented as a model tragedy in the Aristotelian vein. He led the way with his application of the then most modern views on drama theory, directly derived from learned sources like Heinsius, Grotius, and especially Vossius. Form and content, however, were not conducive to drawing large audiences.

His majestic *Lucifer* (1654) deals with the fall of the angels, but it had only some succès de scandale because the Amsterdam church council protested against the performance. Later plays did not reach the stage at all and any effect they may have had can only have been the result of reading. But there are no traces of a real discussion about the questions brought up by Vondel. Later students of his work



16. Frontispiece of Joost van den Vondel, *Lucifer*. Amsterdam 1654.

have suggested, for example, that in his *Jeptha* the Protestant-Catholic controversy played a part (Smit II 1959, 356ff.). The principal character, the Old Testament Judge Jeptha, vows to God after a victory that whatever comes first out of his house to meet him shall be sacrificed. The first thing turns out to be his daughter. The major part of the drama is taken up by passionate discussions whether in this case the sacrifice has to be made. The High Priest, God's representative on earth, tries to dissuade Jeptha from carrying out his promise, but the Judge insists, appealing to his own conscience and even using some Lutheran terminology. The sacrifice is made and only then, in the manner of the Aristotelian *anagnorisis*, does the hero realize his terrible mistake. The opposition between accepting the guidance of authoritative priestly wisdom and the supremacy of one's own conscience would appear to be clear enough. We know, however, of no voice of a close-reading seventeenth-century preacher pointing out this interpretation and subsequently rejecting it. Any opposition *Lucifer* encountered was not based on a careful reading of the play, either, but was simply directed at the theme as such, namely the fall of the angels and its heavenly location, which the Calvinists deemed unsuitable for the stage.

This brings us to another aspect of the relation between religion and literature, the controversy on the theater. Throughout the century the Amsterdam Protestant clergy waged a stubborn war against the stage. This, too, meant the reapplication of an old Christian tradition which, for that matter, had not only remained valid in Protestant circles but had its adherents among Catholics as well. The objections were aimed at the immoral character of many plays, especially farces. Such criticism seems priggish but it may sound less unreasonable and meddlesome, if we remember that literature was generally viewed at this time as a vehicle for education. But actually the objections went deeper. The phenomenon 'stage play' with the elements of dressing up — which in the absence of female actors naturally involved transvestism — and artificiality was viewed with deep distrust. Therefore, no room was allowed for the biblical play either. Even if there were no reason to doubt the good faith of the playwright — in the case of the Roman Catholic Vondel, who had become notorious as a heckler of preachers, there was ample reason! — it would be completely wrong to entrust an arbitrary author with the exegesis of Holy Scripture and to allow a group of people with the most dubious moral reputation to perform it. Exegesis and interpretation of the Bible was the prerogative of the ordained clergy. As a means for Christian instruction and edification the stage was never used by the Dutch Calvinists.

The church did not win this struggle, however. In principle, the Amsterdam Schouwburg remained open. But the Calvinists were not completely defeated, either. The new building had only just opened its doors in 1665 when it was closed again because of the disastrous situation in which the country found itself, due to

the war with England. When performances were possible again, six months later, the burgomasters issued the warning that indecent comedies and farces should be avoided. A more lengthy closure occurred in a later period of war, between 1672 and 1678.

In the meantime the society *Nil volentibus arduum* had been founded. Its proclaimed aim was the advancement of high-quality drama. They wished to exclude immoral plays, but this was based more on educational than on religious considerations. The main objective of the theater should be to bring up young people to virtue. In their attempts to convince the municipal authorities that the Theater should be reopened, *Nil volentibus arduum* also turned against biblical drama for political reasons. In the precarious situation the theater should admit only plays that would give no offence whatsoever. As a result of their actions even farces became morally instructive and biblical matter was no longer allowed on the stage. In this way it may not have been the Reformed Church as such but it certainly was Christian morality that had given a demonstration of power.

III

Literature and ideology



From the start of the Republic, or rather already during its formative years, religion and politics were closely intertwined. Moreover, the motives that led to the Revolt continued to play their parts for a long time. In important political discussions in the Republic, like that on the question of whether and when to conclude the peace with Spain, religious issues carried much weight. Illustrative for the prevailing way of thinking is the repeated comparison of the Netherlands, freed from Spain, with ancient Israel, led out of the Egyptian bondage. From this perspective it might be argued that one chapter, covering both political and religious viewpoints, as well as moral-philosophical issues, would have been the best solution. However, on account of the central position it occupied in the life of the people, I decided to devote a separate section to religion first. The present chapter will therefore deal with general philosophical and ethical positions and their translation into political questions. It will appear, though, that views concerning these issues were often expressed in biblical-religious terms.

In this context, too, authors performed an essential part as opinion-leaders. The functions filled nowadays by the commentators in the media then fell largely to the literati. Such a broad view of the function of literature is consistent, of course, with a tradition that has its roots in Classical Antiquity. In an important document, called *Reden van de waerdicheyt der Poesie* (Lecture on the value of poetry), written between 1610 and 1615, Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft treats this

matter extensively using examples from Greek and Roman history. Poetry, he maintains, always furthered honor and virtue and was, therefore, highly appreciated by authorities and princes. Literature has explored nature and revealed man to himself but above all “it has taught people how to found cities and to enact laws” (*Sij heeft geleert steden te stichten, wetten te stellen*) (Hooft 1970, 60). It has confronted princes with their duties by showing them the reward of eternal glory, but no less by threatening them with eternal disgrace.

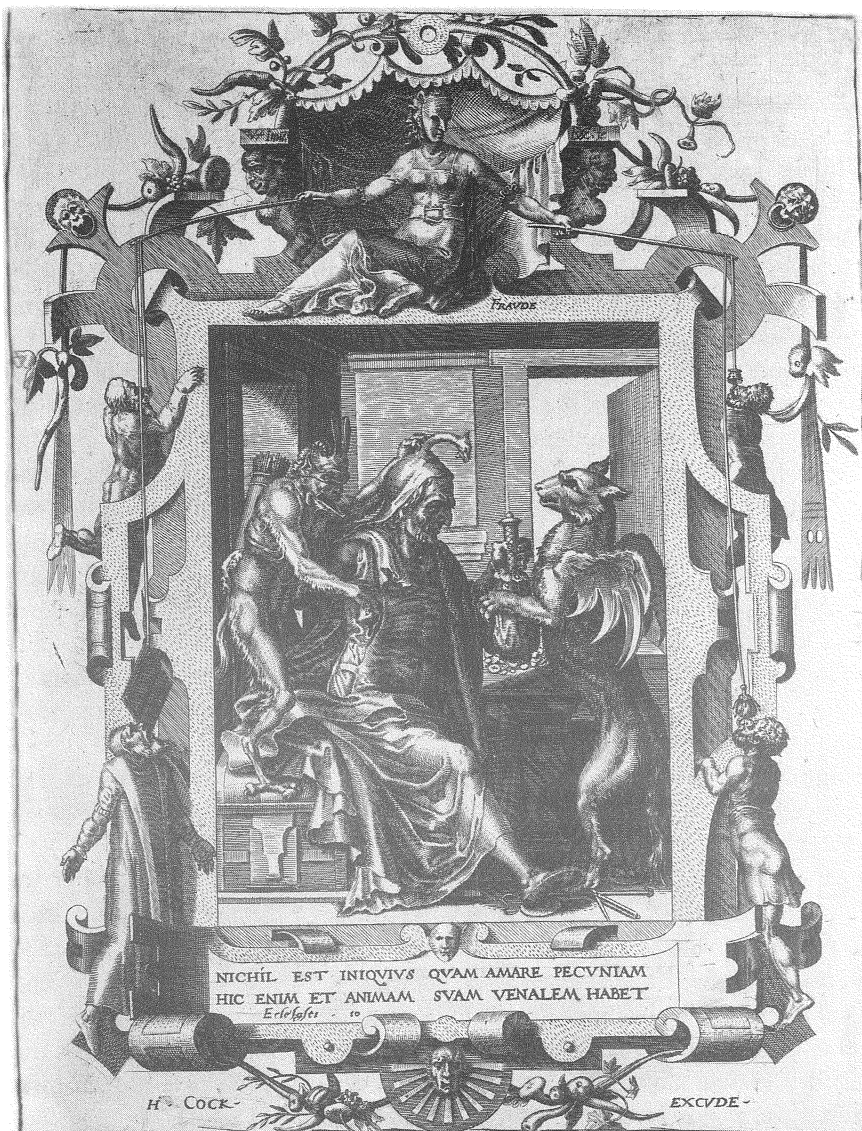
In the Republic, literature was allotted the same duty and it was well fitted to perform it, given the close relationship between poetry and rhetoric. The art of persuasion was taught in the Latin school on the basis of rhetorical literary texts and such ingrained rhetorical argumentative schemes are recognizable in many seventeenth century poems.

Moral philosophy

Moral philosophy and religion go hand in hand. Christianity stood at the back of everyone’s mind with its divine truths, shared by all: man should serve God, live according to His commandments and follow Christ. Simply said, this involved living a virtuous life, practicing Christian fellowship and charity and properly fulfilling one’s duties as a citizen. The fact that religious wars and fierce theological disputes were fought, should not make us forget that virtually everybody subscribed to these basic tenets.

The leading part of society had a second breeding ground in common, that of classical thought. The humanities, philosophy and ethics were based on Antiquity. The expositions of Aristotle, Cicero or Seneca on, for instance, the passions, and the way to deal with them, still formed a central part of sixteenth and seventeenth-century ethics. The old attempt, dating from early Christianity, to reconcile biblical and classical ideas and to accommodate them in one system, remained relevant. The point of departure here, too, was classical writings. These works constituted a rich fund of scholarly thinking, whereas the Bible, especially the Gospel, did not offer its lessons in a systematic fashion. To literature, all of this was of prime importance, in view of its function for public education. Some authors wrote more or less systematic studies in the field of moral philosophy and theology. Others, though not specialists in ethics or philosophy, still show many traces of their interest in these questions in their literary works, even in lyric poetry.

Coornhert was the first author in Europe who wrote a complete ethics in the vernacular, his *Zedekunst dat is Wellevenskunste* (Ethics or the art of living well) of 1586. In this sizable book, which offered a practical ethics, any showing of scholarly learning was avoided. Coornhert expressly did not support his exposition



17. Dirck Volkertszoon Coornhert, *The foolishness of cupidity and avarice*, ca. 1556/1557. Designed by Willem Thibaut. *Ecclesiasticus* 10:10 serves as subscription 'Nothing is more unjust than to love money; such a man even offers for sale his own soul'.

by quotations from Scripture, although he remarks that he would have had little trouble in doing so. He probably wanted to avoid blatant religious controversy in a book that was meant for all good citizens. Still, Calvinists cannot have been happy with an ethics that has at its basic assumption the perfectibility of man, the idea that it is possible for man — by the grace of God — to reach the state of perfection already here on earth. Man will succeed in doing so if his free will makes the right choice, and the will makes that choice when offered correct information. That man sometimes sadly chooses the wrong way, stems from the fact that his will can be misled by wrong information, delusion or even falsehood. When, however, he lets himself be guided by his reason, oriented toward God, and by true knowledge based on experience, he cannot but arrive at what is right. Only after having given these central views on the significance of man's will and judgment, does Coornhert proceed with the traditional treatise on passions, virtues and vices. Here he relies mainly on the classics, especially Cicero.

Coornhert wrote this book at the request of his Amsterdam friend Hendrick Laurensz. Spiegel, who, in his turn, wrote his own text on moral philosophy, the extensive poem *Hart-spieghel*, in the early years of the 17th century. This book, too, is directed not to professionals but to the free and autonomously thinking Dutch citizens. Spiegel's main law is *naturam sequere*. Whoever follows the laws of nature, carries out God's will. Nature urges us, therefore, to do what is right. Because God bestows salvation and eternal bliss, one cannot but love Him. Bad habit, on the other hand, based on lack of insight into what is true happiness, diverts man from the right path.

The optimistic view on man that the two friends had in common, in spite of some significant shades of difference in their thinking, may be found in the work of many later authors, presumably as a result of their influence.

Spiegel was one of the principal members of the Amsterdam Chamber 'In liefde bloeiende'. He was a friend of the younger Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft, as is shown by a letter in which he in a fatherly manner points out the right way of living, with, interestingly, some references to Montaigne, whom he has clearly read with critical attention. Hooft himself was to become an ardent admirer of the "divine Gascon", as he calls him. Another leading member of the Chamber was the playwright dr. Samuel Coster. In a subtle analytical study, the case has recently been argued that in his farce(!) *Teeuwis de boer* (Farmer Teeuwis) he incorporated the ideas of Coornhert and Spiegel regarding the way in which one should control one's desires by using one's reason and especially one's experience (Smits-Veldt 1975-1976). Since about 1610 Bredero, too, was a member of the Chamber. His lyrics show many traces of the influence of Coornhert and especially Spiegel on his way of thinking.

[...]

O man, remember who thou art
In evil sins entangled.
One that's to heart's reflection trained
Owns that with wickedness he's stained, —
Knowledge of God thus gaining.
And his own mis-trained evil heart
He learns, with Christ, though it may smart,
To un-train by re-training.
O God, how many times afresh
Will yet my stubborn, sensual flesh
Resist my power of reason.
Alas! A thousand times each day.
Grant, Lord, that vanquish yet I may
The prince of lies and treason.

Convert, Creator, me to thee,
I pray thee, that thou teachest me
To pray, die and live rightly.
Before my years themselves unwind
And death will leave a prey behind
For a foul grave, unsightly.
Just as the body must be clad,
Needs shelter, wine, water and bread,
The soul needs faith that's healthy,
And light that makes it understand.
Thy spirit, Lord, thy word, thy hand,
Snatch us from a state deathly.

[...]

Gedenckt, o mensch! hoe dat du bist
Bewentelt in dijn sonden.
Wie sich tot sulck hert-spieg'len went,
Sijn eygen snootheyt eerst bekent,
Dees doet hem Gode kennen,
En zijn verwende qua natuur
Leert hy (met Christ) al valt het suur
Door tegen-wenst ontwennen.
Ach God, hoe dick en menigh reys
Weer-streeft dit stribblich weelich vleys
Mijn redelijck vermogen?
Wel duystmael (leyder!) op een dach;
Heer geeft dat ick verwinnen mach
De Vader vande logen.

Schep-Heer my tot dy bekeert,
 Ick bid dat ghy mijn bidden leert,
 Oock sterven, en wel leven;
 Eer dat mijn jaren rollen af,
 En my den doodt het stinckend graf
 Sal tot een proije geven,
 Gelijck het lijf hier heeft van noot
 Huys, kleedingh, wijn, water en broot:
 Soo heeft de ziel van noode
 Gesont geloof, verlicht verstant,
 O Heer u Geest, u woord, u hant
 Die treckt ons uyt den doode.

(Bredero 1975, 561)

This piece contains all the key-words of Coornhert's and Spiegel's moral philosophy: to live rightly ("wel-leven"), the reflection of the heart ("hart-spiegel"), the bad habit ("mis-training") and the counter-training towards what is good, the power of reason and the misleading role of falsehood. The tone, however, is less optimistic and Bredero conveys a stronger sense of direct dependence on the grace of God, which testifies to his Calvinist upbringing.

It will come as no surprise that it is among the Remonstrants that the ideas of Spiegel and Coornhert are best received. In the poetry of Dirck Rafaelsz. Camp-huysen, where, as we have seen, doing God's will here on earth in perfect imitation of Christ was the central issue, echoes from their works are often to be heard, both with respect to content and to form.

The central theme of Coornhert's philosophy was, as has been shown, that of the free will. A tragedy dealing with this problem is *Baeto* (1617) by P.C. Hooft. Man's freedom of choice is demonstrated in the mythical personage of prince Baeto, the hero of the story. He is falsely deprived of his rights on the throne by his stepmother. Rather than plunge the country into civil war, he decides on a peaceful solution and voluntarily goes into exile. Hooft here portrays that man is able, if he but allows his will to be counseled correctly by God-oriented Reason, to choose the right way, as Coornhert had taught. The insight that peace is of overriding importance for the well-being of his people enables Baeto to choose for something that apparently runs counter to his own interests, but will lead later to the foundation of the Dutch state. For Baeto will become the ancestor of the Batavians, the Dutch (Hooft 1954).

Later on, the opposite view is represented in Vondel's tragedies. To him, the Roman Catholic convert in the Augustinian-Thomist tradition, free choice does not exist. In *Gebroeders* (The brothers) of 1640 king David is confronted with a dramatic inner conflict. Should the sons of his defeated adversary, Saul, to whom he had promised to be gracious, be delivered to the savage revenge of their

enemies? Everything inside him resists, but in the end he must bow to the will of God who evidently demands this of him. A human free will that arrives at the correct choice by rational deduction is inconceivable here and to a thinker like Coornhert it would be an incomprehensible solution to kill, in God's name, the innocent offspring to atone for the sins of the father (Vondel 1975).

As late as the early eighteenth century the *Hart-spieghel* was re-edited by the rich poet Pieter Vlaming, pivot of a circle of well-to-do merchants and estate owners, of which the poet Wellekens was also a member. It is interesting to note that in that set a certain re-evaluation of Epicurus is evident. The philosophy of pursuing pleasure by practicing virtue was more valued than the severe stoicism with its distrust and even rejection of the passions. In Epicureanism one saw a certain connection with Spiegel's way of thinking, in which the search for true happiness or pleasure occupied a central position.

The fashionable philosophy of the seventeenth century intelligentsia, however, had been that of neostoicism. The most influential book in this context was that by Justus Lipsius, *De constantia* (1584), almost immediately translated into Dutch by Balthasar Mourentorf, corrector at Plantijn's in Antwerp. *De constantia* is an expression of what has been called crisis philosophy. Lipsius was appalled by the desperate situation in the Southern Netherlands and sought comfort in the philosophical teaching that steadfastness is able to overcome even the most extreme suffering. True Reason should guide man to true insight. In his own copy of the first impression, Lipsius scribbled "and God" in the margins of the passages on the leading role of Reason. This correction was undoubtedly brought about by the criticism he had received owing to the non-Christian character of his work. The addition was duly incorporated in subsequent editions and in this way made Lipsius' work more acceptable for a large group of readers. The central theme of the book is Endurance, proposed as the only way open to man to arm himself against the inescapable blows of Fate. For this reason the warning is given time and again not to cling to earthly possessions.

Traces of Lipsius are to be found in many authors of the time. P.C. Hooft, for instance, summarizes in his poem 'Noodlot' (Fate) Christian-Stoic thinking as follows:

That man is fortunate who knows and is aware
How cause governs all things, that mutually are
So tightly interlinked, there is no living thing
— Apart from God, of course — doing or suffering
Anything of itself: cause moves both man and star.

Geluckigh die d'oorsaecken van de dingen
 Verstaet: en hoe sij vast sijn onderlingen
 Geschakelt sulx, dat geene leventheên,
 (God wtgesejdt) oyt yet van selven deên
 Oft leên maer al door ander oorsaex dringen.

(Hooft 1899, 154)

But most of all stoicism triumphed on the Dutch stage. Numerous plays showed in a Senecan manner the vicissitudes of the rulers of the earth, who, feeling themselves safe in their wealth, have to experience painful turns of the wheel of fortune and are thus confronted with the stoic lesson of temperantia. Especially the tragedies of Samuel Coster on classical subjects, like *Iphigenia* or *Polyxena*, lead the way here (Coster 1883).

Also in one's personal life the attempt was made to behave stoically. When Hooft was heartbroken after having lost his wife, his friend Tesselschade, the daughter of Roemer Visscher, wrote to him that his profound grief had astonished her: "How now, dear sir, could you, who have acquired such a large store of steadfast wisdom, be made miserable by the necessary course of the world?" (Wel hoe mijn heere, ghij die soo veel voorraet van stanthaftige wijsheijt hebt op gedaen? soudt ghij noch wel konen elendich ghemaectt werden, door werreltlijke nootsaekelijckheijt) (Hooft I 1976, 492). In reply, Hooft admits to the failure of stoic philosophy: "How can he, who always picked up pins and nails to fix what he loved securely to his heart, when it is ripped from there, be left with anything but unhealable rifts?" (Die nojt anders dan spelden en spijkers opzocht om, 't geen hij beminde, naghelvast in zijn harte te maeken, hoe kan 't hem daer afgescheurt worden zonder ongeneeslijke reeten te laeten?) (Hooft I 1976, 494). And so he refuses to pay the price of *apatheia*.

Behind all these shades of opinions, colored by classical philosophy and Christian thinking, a rather static world view looms up, in which the highest place is by right God's. The world is still seen as hierarchically ordered. Uppermost is the monarch — this is not even doubted in the Republic, as is shown by the genuine horror caused by the regicide in England — and at the bottom are the common people, contemptuously called "het grauw", the grey rabble.

Everybody has his own proper place and in principle one should stay there. That in practice, certainly in the first years of the Republic when social mobility was fairly strong, this rule was not always followed, is another story. The wealthy have their duties towards society. They should support the poor, widows and orphans and the elderly in their need. The poor should know their place.

Apart from his *Zedekunst dat is wellevenskunste*, Coornhert also wrote many smaller works, among them the interesting *Boeventucht* (Discipline of scoundrels) of 1587 (Coornhert 1985). In spite of the title, the subject is not primarily the



18. Hendrick de Keyser, *Entrance gate to the Amsterdam House of Correction or 'Rasphuis', with the personification of Castigatio*, ca. 1603.

punishment of criminals but poor relief. Coornhert sees in unemployment one of the most important causes of criminal behavior, and because preventing is better than curing, he looked for means to set to work the large mass of loafers and beggars: the cities should create some sort of sheltered workshops where properly paid work may be done. For the idlers who nevertheless persist in choosing the wrong path, he proposes alternative punishment. Rather than to brand or to maim them — the usual solution — one should employ them on galleys, in jails or in dike building.

PAUPER AGAT CAUTE.
X.



Ouidius.
Quid fuit ut tutas agitare's Dadalus alas,
 Icarus immensas nomine signat aquas?
 Nempe, quod hic alio, demissus ille volaret,
 Nam pennas ambo non habuere suas.
 Crede mihi, bene qui lauit, bene vixit, & intra
 Fortunam debet quisque manere suam.

VVaerom

VVaerom koomje boven drijven
 Jonghe Bliccken kleyne vis?
 Ghij mocht beter onderblijven,
 Daer u eyghen vvooningh is:
 Boven vliegghen groote meuvven
 Met een vvonder fel geraes,
 Die geduerigh komen schreyvven
 Om te grijpen eenigh aes;
 Laet daer groote visfen komen,
 Laetse frijghen inde lucht
 Die geen graghe vogels schromen,
 Noch voor grijpers lijn beducht.
 Alderhande kleyne dieren
 Sijn beneden alderbest,
 Daer ist datse moghen svvieren,
 Daer is doch haer eyghen nest:
 Als een Blicck hem meynt te draghen
 Soo gelijk een Walle-vis
 Dat sijn voor hem vvisse plaghen,
 Mits hy knap gevanghen is
 Als een minder meynt te pleghen,
 Dat een meerder heeft beftaen;
 Dat is hem gans ongelegen,
 Want het doet hem t'onder gaen.

Juvenal.
Haud facile emergunt quorum virtutibus obstat
 Res angusta domi.
 Onid.
Pauper amet causâ timeat maledicere pauper
 Multaque diuitibus non patiendâ ferat.

Ccc

19. Emblem 'Pauper agat caute', in: Jacob Cats, *Emblemata moralia et oeconomica*. Rotterdam 1627.

Particularly his arguments on prevention fit very well, of course, in his system of perfectibility. If idlers are taken care of by means of appropriate work, they can be taught the right way of living. In Coornhert's thinking they are surely not predestined to crime. But in those who do not want to be corrected, bad habits develop into evil nature, and although the principle of perfectibility also is valid for such criminals, they regrettably do not succeed in converting theory into practice.

Actually, Coornhert is one of the few who occupied themselves seriously with the problems of poverty and unemployment which were rampant in the Republic's Golden Age. Hoping for the best, many migrated to the cities, expecting, often in vain, to find work there. The influx of outsiders led to xenophobia. Probably representative for the feelings of many inhabitants of Amsterdam, were the tirades in Bredero's *Spaanschen Brabander* (1618). One finds no trace here of any attempt towards social analysis. All strangers are regarded as frauds, who pose as poor or maimed in order to arouse compassion in the generous citizens, and then squander all good alms on liquor and women. Begging should be prohibited, the city should close its gates for the growing streams of foreigners and only the well-intentioned indigenous poor are entitled to support. In this way the characters in Bredero's play voice the views of the citizens in Amsterdam (Bredero 1974, 243-44).

Feelings of social equality are nowhere to be discovered in the period. People have to accept the fate God has ordained. Someone who moves out of his own class runs a great risk. Thus father Cats teaches in the emblem 'Pauper agat caute' (The poor should be careful):

Why are you floating upward so
Little breamlet, tiny fish?
Better far to stay below
Where your proper station is.
Here, above, the seagulls fly
In their loud and noisy way.
Listen how they shriek and cry
Looking for an easy prey.
There the larger fish may dart
Let them rise towards the air
Who at hungry birds don't start
Nor fear snatching talons there.
Little folk of every kind
To the bottom side keep best;
Flitting there, they surely find
Safety in their proper nest.
If a breamlet wants to do
What becomes a giant whale
Punishment will follow, too,
Quickly caught, he'll sadly fail.
If a lesser man will strive
T'wards the things his betters cherish
Accidents he'll see arrive:
Inescapably he'll perish.

Waerom koomje boven drijven
 Ionche bliecken kleyne vis?
 Ghy mocht beter onder blijven,
 Daer u eyghen wooningh is:
 Boven vliegghen groote meuwen
 Met een wonder fel geraes,
 Die gedurigh komen schreuwen
 Om te grijpen eenigh aes;
 Laet daer groote vissen komen,
 Laetse stijghen inde lucht
 Die geen graghe vogels schromen,
 Noch voor grijpers sijn beducht.
 Alderhande kleyne dieren
 Sijn beneden alderbest,
 Daer ist datse moghen swieren,
 Daer is doch haer eyghen nest:
 Als een Blicck hem meynt te draghen
 Soo gelijck een Walle-vis
 Dat sijn voor hem wisse plaghen,
 Mits hy knap gevanghen is.
 Als een minder meynt te pleghen
 Dat een meerder heeft bestaen;
 Dat is hem gans ongelegen,
 Want het doet hem t'onder gaen.

(Cats 1962, 35-36)

Religion does offer comfort, however: in the hereafter the differences between poor and rich will be gone and the boundary between saved and lost in no way runs parallel to that between wretched and wealthy.

Very rarely is a critical note towards the wealthy heard. Huygens takes a very severe view of a form of charity that actually only gives back what had been stolen in the first place:

You build an alms-house, Claes, for your soul's peace and health?
 It's large and takes a lot of your ill-gotten wealth.
 But still it is too small to house the many poor,
 That through your usury aren't with us anymore.

Ghij bouwt een Arm-huijs, Claes, tot troost van uw gemoet
 'T is groot, en 'tkost veel gelds van uw gewoeckert goed.
 Maer 'tis noch veel te klein voor Armen by dozijnen
 Die door dat woeckeren sijn komen te verdwijnen.

(Huygens V 1895, 218)

But this is not criticism directed at society, either, but at individuals who neglect their duties. Against the closed Christian-Stoic bourgeois world view as such, no opposition arises.

However there are some figures on the periphery voicing more or less deviant views. Parading as a libertine is Matthijs van de Merwede van Clootwijk. After a three-year stay in Rome he publishes a volume of lascivious verse on his adventures there, *Roomse min-triompfen* (Triumphs of love in Rome), in which criticism on prevalent morality reigns supreme (1651). In a preface he defends both his behavior and his writings on grounds of principle, with Pierre Charron, whose *La sagesse* is completely based on Montaigne's *Essais*, as one of his guiding lights. One should follow nature and not be led astray by the fallacies that are pressed on us by irrational public opinion. Reason and nature are central concepts in his argument, definite Spiegelian traits therefore, although the author of the *Hartspiegel* would have shuddered at the conclusions drawn here. In good libertine tradition the preface contains a diatribe against the clergy, with Protestant ministers and Catholic priests coming off equally badly (Van de Merwede van Clootwijk 1676, fol. A2-A5). Not without success, as is apparent from several reprints, the book addresses itself to the free-thinking intelligentsia that is fairly well-read and able to follow the far from simple language employed by the author. Van de Merwede did stretch the well-known Dutch tolerance to its very limits, though: in the province of Utrecht his book was officially burned.

In a different manner the Amsterdam town-physician to the poor, W.G. van Focquenbroch, takes his leave from bourgeois Christian morality. His views on life and art are utterly skeptical, sometimes even cynical: *Fumus gloria mundi* (Smoke is the world's glory) is the double-edged motto of this unhappy pipe-smoker. His verse was very successful, too. Reprints were published far into the eighteenth century .

Politics

The foundation of the political system in the Republic had been laid down in the Revolt. This fact had a strong impact on political thinking. From it stemmed such questions as pertain to the legitimacy of power, the nature of the power of the monarchy, and people's rights. Small wonder, therefore, that Hooft in his oration on the dignity of poetry, looks back on that recent history and takes from it the examples he needs. He emphasizes the services poetry had rendered to the country in its struggle against tyranny and the founding of freedom. Presumably he is referring here to the part played by the Chambers of Rhetoric in forming public opinion and to that of the many martyr and beggar songs that had been distributed in large numbers as pamphlets or in book form during the second half of the sixteenth century. The authorities had had a sharp nose for the subversive power of this poetry. In a decree by the Antwerp municipality of 1565 it was strictly forbid-



20. Jan Luyken, *Jan Bosch van Berg (Jan Durps), executed on the Vrijthof at Maastricht, anno 1559*.

den “to put into the hands of the worthy citizenry various bad books, refrains, songs and the such, suspect of heresy, covertly carried in pockets, stockings or hats”.

As the quotation makes clear, religious, i.e. heretical writings call for political measures; this is quite understandable since the political and religious content of this kind of literature is tightly interwoven. The ‘*Historie van een martelaar verbrand*’ (Story of a martyr burned), a song on the fate of the first martyr in the Northern Netherlands, Jan de Bakker, who went to the stake in 1525 on account of his adherence to the Protestant faith, could not have failed to have political effects. The anonymous poet may put words of forgiveness in the martyr’s mouth, but he himself finishes quite vehemently:

Guzzle, ye wolves, the red martyr blood.
 Guzzle and fill thus your need from that flood.
 Dive in, cut that roast you ’ve awaited.
 Is Cain, of Abel, his brother’s blood
 Nevermore to be sated?

Suypt op ghy Wolven der martelaren bloet
 Suypt op en vervult uwen nijdighen moet
 Tast toe snijdt van t ghebraden.
 Is Kain van Abel zijn broeders bloet
 Nemmermeer te versaden?

(*Schriftuurlijke liedekens* 1900, 93)

Beside this type of martyr song more belligerent poems circulated. The Revolt's slogan was "Vive le geus", because of the fact that the word "Geus", beggar, had been chosen as a title of honor. When in 1566 a group of noblemen had come to hand to the Governess Margaretha of Parma a list of complaints, one of her advisers spoke to her the encouraging words: "Do not worry, my lady, ce ne sont que des gueux". The battle cry had been incorporated in a very popular song by the former Catholic priest Arend Vos, probably written in the turbulent year 1566:

Let's beat the drum now, dirredomdaining,
 Let's beat the drum now, dirredumdoose,
 Let's beat the drum now, dirredomdaining,
 Vive le geus is the slogan we use.

The Spanish small-pox, light like the wool-flocks,
 The Spanish small-pox, are evil I say,
 The Spanish small-pox, 'neath the Pope's cassocks,
 The Spanish small-pox, growing for aye.

The sword has been drawn, God's vengeance is nearing,
 The sword has been drawn, described by St. John,
 The sword has been drawn, Doomsday is appearing,
 The sword has been drawn, one stroke and you're gone.

Slaet op den trommele van dirredomdeine
 Slaet op den trommele van dirredomdoes
 Slaet op den trommele van dirredomdeine
 Vive le geus is nu de loes.

De Spaensche pokken, licht als sneeuw vlocken
 De Spaensche pokken, loos ende boos;
 De Spaensche pokken, onder s Paus rocken
 De Spaensche pokken groeyen altoos.

'T swaert is getrocken, certeyn Gods wraec naect,
 'T swaert is getrocken, daer Joannes aff schrijft,
 'T swaert is getrocken, dat Apocalypsis maect naect,
 't Zwaert is getrocken, gij wert nu ontlijft.

(*Geuzenliedboek* I, 35-36)

The sword mentioned may have been that of the Apocalypse, but the listener probably thought of more tangible weapons.

Also the 'Wilhelmus', the Dutch national anthem, stems from this period. The poem was most probably written by Marnix of St. Aldegonde, a friend and close collaborator of prince William of Orange. The text is presumed to date back to the years 1570-1571; after a first attempt at armed resistance in 1568 had failed, the prince was looking for fresh contacts from his base in Germany and, having found them in the States of the province of Holland, tried to raise an army. It is a propaganda song for the prince. William, who is the speaker in the poem, presents himself as a faithful subject of the Spanish king. However, he has to obey God more than men, and thus must come to the aid of his oppressed people. The poem is intrinsically biblical but also has a tangible political purpose: to obtain forms of support, both financial and other.

Now, Hooft undoubtedly had in mind these and other texts when he praised the contributions of poetry towards the liberation of the country from the Spanish oppressor. And in this way, the responsibility of literature in the forming of public opinion, also in the political field, is legitimized and firmly anchored in history. Still, even if poetry gets praised for its role in the Revolt, the picture painted in the first chapter of the place of literature in the upper strata of a burgher civilization suggests that, in principle, literature would tend to conserve the status quo and to support authority. The turmoil of the Revolt had passed. The Republic was an ordered society and it should remain that way. Criticism was possible but should remain within reason. In the riots that now and then caused some concern to the authorities, we find no poets involved. Yet, some authors got into trouble with the law. For his anti-Orangist play *Palamedes* (1625), Vondel was in danger of being delivered to the authorities in The Hague, which would have meant a lengthy imprisonment. The magistrate of Amsterdam, a city keen on its own prerogatives, protected him, however, so that he was let off with a fine: "flogging with a fox-tail", it was called (Brandt 1932, 18). A satire on the mighty Amsterdam burgomaster Bicker, on the other hand, resulted in exile from the city for another writer, Jan Soet.

Sometimes the routes repression walked are untraceable, as may be seen in the following case. In 1643, Vondel wrote a poem on the Bourse of Amsterdam (see appendix p. 158). He praised the building as a masterpiece by Hendrik de Keyser, but the poem carried critical undertones. The keywords are connected with deceit and the final warning is that fortune is fickle, as the fate of earlier famous towns like Tyre and Sidon show. Even though it may be going too far to call this text subversive, a poet who attacks Amsterdam's fortress of mercantile capitalism is tampering with the foundations of society. Nothing is known of Vondel's reasons for writing this poem. One may suppose that the critical note is somehow connected to the fact that the poet's own speculations on the Bourse had ended in massive failure, a loss of some 40.000 guilders. In any case, a reac-



21. Poem 'Aen de Beurs van Amsterdam' by Joost van den Vondel, 1643. Ornamental border, attributed to Salomon Savery.

tion to the poem appeared by another Amsterdam citizen, the innkeeper Jan Soet. In coarse terms he defends the Bourse against Vondel's diatribes. Vondel replicates, and surprisingly, the inveterate polemicist bows to the opposition. The Bourse is now put forward as existing for the common weal, her wealth is lauded, as is her power on the seven seas. And the end does not contain criticism, but the wishful warning that the Bourse might remain level-headed in its prosperity: only by the virtue of *constantia* will she be preserved. If Vondel had, indeed, leveled fundamental criticism against an institution that, by definition, exists on the basis of uncertainty and will consequently, as he saw it, finally founder, the second poem proves that he let himself be brought into line, apparently without too much grumbling.

Another poet, Thomas Asselijn, operated on the brink of the permissible. A typical representative of the petty bourgeoisie, he ran a dyeing room that failed to flourish and led to repeated bankruptcy. There is a play by his hand in which, quite exceptionally, a riot does not receive a completely negative verdict. The subject is the famous insurgency in Naples, 1647, by Mas Anjello, spokesman and leader of the poor Italian fishermen. Asselijn portrays the insurgents with some sympathy. He gives them ample room to voice their grievances which even some court circles in the play consider legitimate. The people's rights had, indeed, been violated by the authorities. Taxes were high and the proceeds appeared to end up mainly in the pockets of the rich. Might Asselijn have had in mind an analogy to the Dutch situation? If so, he operated with great caution. In his preface he stresses the dangers inherent in revolts and in the play itself he also shows that the insurgents fare badly. If the rabble gets free rein the end is brutal violence and murder. Still, the lesson drawn is not an absolute rejection of rebellious behavior but a warning to the authorities to govern the people with such wisdom that no need for insurgence arises (Asselijn 1907, 23-94). *Mas Anjello* (1668) did not go unchallenged. In particular the members of the society *Nil volentibus arduum*, always in favor of law and order, objected to the politically slanted tragedy. However, the Amsterdam authorities did not see fit to ban the play: it was published and performed on the Amsterdam stage.

As the examples show, poets strove to perform their roles as independent critics of the authorities in the service of the whole of society. From that perspective one may view a formal verse satire like Vondel's *Roskam* (Currycomb) (Vondel III 1929, 300). In this thoughtful and well-designed poem he denounces the corruption of the regents. The people have to bear the burden of the war, while the merchant-regents profit greatly from their trade with the enemy. As a positive model he chooses a former burgomaster of Amsterdam, C.P. Hooft, the father of the poet. Under his reign words and deeds were still in agreement. A poem like this carries the pretension that it is voicing a universally valid view. Yet the poet does not abstain from choosing sides, either. The authorities at whom Vondel aimed his barbs, belonged to the Orangist, Calvinist faction and that is the political grouping to which Vondel was a strong opponent. In contrast, the so warmly praised burgomaster Hooft belonged to the group of Vondel's political friends. This goes to show that the *poeta vates* often was not so much the interpreter of divine inspiration, as the representative of earthly interests. Even the splendid poem by Vondel, 'Vredewensch aen Constantyn Huygens' (Wish for peace to Constantijn Huygens) from 1632, which one would like to read as voicing a universal human desire for peace, may be shown to fit perfectly in the policy of the Amsterdam patriciate that was in favor of peace with Spain for mercantile reasons (Vondel III 1929, 392).

If, in this way, the poets do not preach universal truths, but act as spokesmen for specific factions, literature becomes a likely vehicle for discussion and dialogue. Instances in which poets react to each other's writings are by no means rare, therefore, and sometimes rather strong words are used. Some authors regard the heavy rainfall in 1648 as punishment for a peace that displeases God — a point of view to be found in Calvinist circles where the opinion reigned that one should go on fighting the Roman Catholic foe. Jan Vos, on the other hand, argues that the rain actually washes away the blood stains of the war and therefore must be considered a sign of divine approval of the concluded peace; and he strongly warns against the "cursed lips" of his opponents, the Calvinist ministers (Vos 1662, 260-62).

To an almost greater degree than in national discussions, authors were involved in matters dealing with their own cities. Poets shed their light on countless municipal events and institutions. Vondel and his eternal competitor Jan Vos sang the praise of the new Town Hall. But Vondel also wrote about the building of a depot of marine stores or about the needs of the Amsterdam orphans. Six van Chandelier took part in the discussion as to whether or not a tower should be added to the Nieuwe Kerk (New Church) on the Dam and Jan Vos wrote a poem on the cutting down of trees in Amsterdam, resignedly concluding: "De bomen moeten voor een stad vol huizen wijken" (The trees must yield to houses in the town) (Vos 1662, 161-165). Yet, as noted before, all this could hardly be called a well-greased propaganda machine. There are no indications that the municipal authorities expressly hired poets to mobilize public opinion, and for their part, poets kept their distance, too. Vondel may have been a sort of unofficial town poet of Amsterdam, but the magistrates must have cursed him often for his tactlessness. Was it really necessary for him, they might well have thought, to parade his Roman Catholic faith at every opportunity, when that religion had no official status in society?

The overall picture that arises is that of a strong (local) patriotism. The Amsterdam poets identified with the interests of the city and those interests were deemed *grosso modo* to be served best by that stratum of the population to which they themselves belonged, the (higher) bourgeoisie.

IV

The poet and everyday life



The Dutch masters are world-famous for their genre paintings. In often rather small pictures they offer a wealth of images of the everyday life of the people in and out of doors, smoking, drinking, making music, being ill, or shopping. Modern research has taught us, however, that the artists were not solely indulging their desire to copy nature, and that many of the strikingly realistic scenes contain hidden lessons. Still, the fact remains that on the surface reality is portrayed with an astonishing wealth of detail. And so the paintings give us a unique and invaluable picture of the Dutch way of life.

Universal vs. particular

If, to use Svetlana Alpers' term the "art of describing" is an important component of Dutch art, one is tempted to expect that literature, too, might give ample room to the everyday life of the citizenry. But actually it falls a good deal short of such expectations. The general tendency of literature in this period is certainly not to put in words the everyday life of the average person and to picture him in his everyday surroundings during his normal activities. Usually, poetry has other goals. In the Aristotelian mode the poet expounds universal truths. It is precisely that which distinguishes him from or even puts him above the historian who is tied

down by actual fact. The poet tries to ascend above the trivial and accidental. In Dutch tragedies we therefore find in general only princes and rulers whose tribulations serve as means to demonstrate their exemplary steadfastness and virtue. Not even in the Dutch Republic was it conceivable that the life of a commoner might be instructive in this way. Only in tragedies dealing with the history of the Revolt against Spain, were representatives of the common people sometimes allowed to play a (subordinate) part.

A lyrical poet sings of love or writes occasional verse dealing with the affairs of town or country, or with marriage and death, but in any case usually with a generalizing, didactic tenor *sub specie aeternitatis*. In connection with Vondel the literary historian W.A.P. Smit formulated this as follows: "Even in his lyrical work, we see the Renaissance poet merging his personal experiences and feelings into that which is generally valid, so that they may thus be integrated in the universal" (Smit I 1956, 23). When Vondel writes a poem on the death of his baby son, he does not portray his personal emotions but offers a universally valid lesson: "the eternal comes before the transient" (*Eeuwigh gaat voor oogenblik*) (Vondel III 1929, 388). In this way poetry rises above the incidental and occasional to the level of a general lesson. Obviously this notion of literature corresponds precisely with its educational function, as discussed earlier. Such poetry, therefore, will tend to avoid attention to personal detail or trivial factuality.

On the other hand, this is not the complete picture, either. Throughout Dutch literature in this period one may catch glimpses of ordinary life and hear tones that carry highly personal emotions and experiences. Besides the dominant poetics of the universal there appears to be a poetics of the particular. In the work of some poets attention to their own experiences in their own familiar surroundings even has a programmatic character. This type of verse is less well-known and does not figure prominently in the available translations. For this reason I shall be quoting quite freely in the following section.

Bredero's "book of use"

Without any doubt the first poet to be mentioned for his importance in this field is Gerbrand Adriaensz. Bredero (1585-1618). In his person we can easily discern how attention to everyday reality, accompanied by attention to personal experience, was not something natural to poetry in the early seventeenth century but in fact the result of a conscious choice. The hard facts pertaining to his life, although pitifully scarce, evoke a middle class young man who had received only a limited education but whose many talents enabled him to gain a place in the famous Amsterdam Chamber of Rhetoric 'In liefde bloeiende'. A text from this early

period shows the poet on his intellectual way up. In this letter to a friend who had given him one of his first literary commissions, he displays his literary skills. Using quotations from Scripture and especially from classical authors, he expatiates on the value of friendship in a rather pedantic way, clearly helped by one of the many existing books of adagia: “The superb speaker Cicero says that of all things given by wisdom to live well, none is greater, more beautiful and blissful than friendship. Martial declares that perfect friendship exists between those who are good and equal in virtue, as Seneca confirms, saying, equality of morals makes and strengthens friendship” etc. (Den alder wel sprekendste Cicero seyt van alle dingen die door de wijsheyt gegeven zyn om wel te leven, geene is grooter, schoonder noch blijder dan de vrientschap. Martiales schrijft, de volmaackte vriendschap is tusschen de goede en gelijcke in deucht, gelijck Seneca bevesticht en seyt, gelijkheyt van zeeden, maackt en bindt de vrientschap), three printed pages long (Bredero 1975a, 109-111). From this letter he appears well on the road to becoming the traditional learned humanist poet. However, he then takes off in another direction. And though we are not able to trace the kind of process involved, one is tempted to surmise that the talented young man found the courage to choose for his own milieu, instead of conforming to the intellectual elite with their penchant for the classics.

Be that as it may, he chose programmatically for empiricism. The preface to his *Groot Lied-boeck* (Large Song-book) contains very interesting remarks on this topic. He defends the language he uses which expressly is not based on the classical examples but on that of his fellow townspeople with their Amsterdam accents.



22. 'Partying peasants' in: G.A. Bredero, *Groot Lied-boeck*. Amsterdam 1622.

"The only book from which I learned is the book of use" (ick heb anders geen Boeck geleert als het Boeck des gebruycx), he says in this connection, but it has wider implications. A little further on he clarifies his meaning: "The best painters are those who come closest to life" (Het zijn de beste Schilders die 't leven naast komen) (Bredero 1975, 17-18).

In his lyrical verse attention to daily life is strikingly present. Often it is mounted in a traditional national context. One of his most famous songs is 'Boerengeselschap' (Company of peasants), a story of a party of peasants who are going to Vinkeveen (a village near Amsterdam) in order to take part in the popular and cruel entertainment of goose-pulling (=killing a goose by pulling it to pieces). The whole business ends in a brutal brawl and the poem concludes with the stereotyped warning to the townspeople to stay away from peasant pleasures (Bredero 1975, 47). But still it is evident in the poem that Bredero was an observer with a keen eye for detail and a sharp ear for language. His work is considered a trustworthy source for our knowledge of the dialect of the province of Holland in his time, and especially that of Amsterdam.

One need not be surprised, therefore, that in his lyrical verse, the amorous as well as the religious, a very personal, autobiographical note is struck, even if the poem is traditional in principle. We find a song, for instance, in which the poet complains of gossip and ponders that he would not be subject to it if his writing had not gained him a certain fame. The poem varies the theme of the *amator exclusus* and is located in the vicinity of the Muiderslot where Bredero roams about in the cold countryside and implores his beloved — apparently a guest of Hooft — to remember him, "Garbrande", amidst all her pleasures; his Christian name is in fact the last word of the song (Bredero 1975, 322-325).

A similar emphasis on his personal experience may be found elsewhere in his work. A most extraordinary example is afforded by the poem with the curious title 'A certain passion or emotion, observed from the turmoil of my thoughts, just before my bearing the colors':

Every man desires an honorary post,
 But being talked about I value less than most.
 So my mind vacillates and weighs, as well it might
 That what emboldens some, makes my bold heart feel fright.
 The glory anyone would take great pains to get
 I try, alas, it's true, to buy off by cold sweat.
 Well now, Garbrande, where's your spirit, man, your wit,
 Where is that heart so bold that's in your bosom hid?
 What turned your courage proud into such deep dejection?
 As ensign of the Prince would you stoop to defection?
 Defy the sulfur flames and brave the musketry.
 Such foolish cowardice leads to discourtesy.
 Lift up your honest head, and if some might protest,
 What man ever succeeds in pleasing all the rest?

De Eeren-Ampten zijn wel wens'lijck by de menschen,
Doch d'op-spraak acht ik meer als 't geen de and're wenschen:
Dies ballanst mijn gemoed, dat vast met Reden wickt,
Het geen een ander kloect, mijn moedigh harte schrickt.
De glori daer elck een met moeyten om sou loopen,
Die soeck ick, laas!, met schaamt, met anxst-sweet af te koopen.
Wel hoe, *Garbrande*, hoe! waar is u sin, u wit?
Waer is dat stoute hart dat in u boesem zit?
Wat heeft u fiere moed soo moedeloos verslaghen?
Schroomt ghy met eeren hier de Prince-Vaan te draghen?
Puft swavels licht geblick, en 't bald'ren vande Roers,
't Is sotte flauwigheyd; van bloodheyd werdmen boers.
Recht op dijn eerlijck hoofd, al mochtet yemand laacken:
Wie kan 't Ian-alleman doch recht te passe maacken?

(Bredero 1975, 519)



23. Jan Beerstraten, *The castle of Muiden in winter*, 1658.

Never before had a Dutch poet analyzed his own experience so painstakingly, so completely without any sense of classical decorum, restraint or embellishment. The whole situation would appear almost naive, trivial or even ludicrous. Anyone wanting to present himself in an interesting way, would surely not disclose how nervous he was when he was to figure as an ensign for the first time, and even less how he was filled with fear when the muskets were fired — not in any dangerous warlike situation but just for show and practice. And again he does not act the anonymous poet, but presents himself using his Christian name. From the situation a lesson is drawn in the last line which gives the poem its didactic point and warrants its inclusion in the meditative part of the *Groot Lied-boeck*. However, it is not the rather insipid lesson, but its immediate cause that makes it a memorable poem.

It is an interesting point, by the way, that Bredero's *Lied-boeck* was printed in Leyden, with a preface by Petrus Scriverius, the same scholar who had edited the learned poetry of Daniel Heinsius. Evidently the intellectual Leyden milieu did appreciate this poet who represented their common Dutch identity in language and subject matter.

Bredero's play *Spaanschen Brabander* (1618) also shows how he made use of the literary conventions of his age to attain his own goals. The genres that on the surface would appear to give a rather realistic picture of the common Dutch people are comedy and farce, of which a large number were written in the Golden Age. Sometimes they seem to lead right into a Dutch private room, where a robust matron rules her maid and her husband with a firm hand. But the stereotyped character of the stories and situations indicates that the intention of these theater pieces is not so much to allow a glimpse into the life of the commoner as to evoke approved hilarious situations. In accordance with classical poetics, the life of common people was shown on stage with the intention of making the audience laugh. The *Spanish Brabanter* conforms to this convention but also shows important deviations. The plot is derived from a Spanish picaresque novel and the main character is a typical stage figure: a so-called noble gentleman who tries to uphold his status by using many polysyllables in Brabant dialect, while the role of his servant is to puncture his pretensions.

But notwithstanding the traditional design, we receive a very lively picture of Amsterdam in that period. A prostitute recounts in the play how she had taken up her occupation after having been seduced by her mistress' son and put out into the street without mercy. Source studies regarding paternity suits have shown that this was indeed common practice. The background of the story is formed by the plague that exacted its toll at the time, and the citizens on the stage talk about the deadly threat. The play gives also a clear picture of what Amsterdam had to cope with from a social point of view. The city was going through a phase of expansion



24. Jan Davidszoon de Heem, *Still life with books*. Among the books a copy of Bredero's play *Spanish Brabanter*.

of alarming proportions. During Bredero's lifetime (1585-1618) it grew from slightly under 30.000 to almost 100.000 inhabitants. This presented all but unsurmountable problems and the older citizens in the play regard the influx of people from all points of the compass with a great deal of misgiving.

For lack of a better designation the *Spanish Brabanter* is called a comedy, and this is warranted in view of the many merry moments offered by the story and its happy ending. But the author gives his characters the opportunity to tell their real life stories without making them into laughing stocks or intimating that they are insignificant. Unfortunately Bredero died at an early age and the direction he had pointed out was not followed by the stage. This seems a pity in view of the fact that the Dutch theater all through the seventeenth century suffered from a sharp dichotomy in which all that dealt with serious matter was relegated to royal circles — which for a republic could not but imply a sense of unreality — and in which events occurring in the lives of the petty bourgeoisie seemed suitable only as laughing matter.

Genres

In Bredero's case I have linked the way in which ordinary life entered literature to an outstanding personality. A more structural approach should deal with the ques-



25. North pole travellers attacked by a bear.

tion as to which literary genres might best be suited to give attention to real life. The modern genre that one might think answers the requirement best, the novel, did not yet exist in its present form. Still, some picaresque novels appear to offer glimpses of ordinary life. The pretension to recount real events actually belongs to the conventions of the genre, as is evident from prefaces or title pages. A recently rediscovered story, *Wonderlicke avontuer van twee goelieven* (Miraculous adventures of two lovers), dating from 1624, tells a story of two youngsters from a bourgeois milieu who have a wide range of adventures in the cleverly accentuated contemporaneous setting of the Thirty Year's War in Germany. A spicy and attractive feature will have been that the girl was acting, in male clothing, as a lieutenant's servant. The book also contains a report of a journey to the West Indies, presumably for propaganda purposes, in order to incite commercial interests in this region (*Wonderlicke avontuer* 1984). The best-known Dutch picaresque novel, *Den vermakelyken avonturier* (The entertaining adventurer's story) by Nicolaas Heinsius, which dates from 1695, is built completely along traditional lines and certainly cannot be considered a realistic picture of life in the Low Countries of that period, although it contains a wealth of references to the prevailing circumstances (Nic. Heinsius jr. 1981).

More of real life is to be discovered in the many travel books of the period. Gerrit de Veer offers unforgettable scenes of his voyage to Nova Zembla. Two sailors digging for precious stones were lying together in a pit

when a white, lean bear stealthily came near and gripped one of them in the neck. He, not knowing what happened, called out: who is grabbing me from behind? His mate, lying next to him in the pit, raised his head to see who it might be and seeing that it was a hideous bear, called out: alas poor mate, it is a bear; he stood up in a hurry and ran away. The bear bit the other one's head to pieces and sucked the blood out of it.

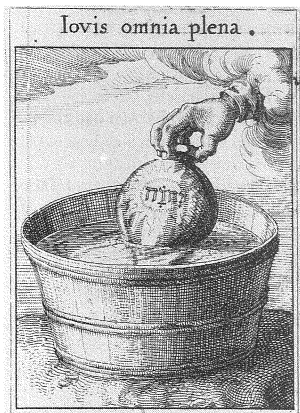
[ist gheschiedt...] datter een witte maghere beer is listelick aengekomen, ende greep d'een van dese twee in de neck, hy niet wetende wat het was, riep, wie grypt my daer van achteren? Sijn maet, die by hem in de kuyl lagh, lichte syn hooft op om te sien wie 't wesen mocht, ende siende dat het een beer was, riep, och maet 't is een beer, staende mitsdien wel wacker op, ende loopende al syn best wegh. De beer beet den eenen terstondt 't hoofd in stucken, ende soogh het bloedt daer uyt.

(De Veer s.d., 9)

Realistic as such stories may be, and recognizable for the many Dutch families with sailors among its members, they are surely not presented as portraying the average citizen's experiences.

The same, but for other reasons, goes for comedy and farce, as already indicated. Many of the scenes that look so life-like are highly traditional. Anyone who would deduce from such pieces that Dutch housewives are always scolding and Dutch husbands are continually fornicating drunkards or hen-pecked fools lets himself be tricked by literature. Still, high and low comedies do show something of social reality. They evoke a whole subculture of second-hand dealers, students, thief catchers, quack doctors and crooked lawyers which is encountered nowhere else in this way and which must have been at least in some way familiar to the audience.

Traces of realism are at least as abundant in the didactic genres, especially emblematics with its method of contemplative observation. It was the notion that "There is nought void or idle in any thing" (Daer is niet ledighs of ydels in de din-ghen) which induced Roemer Visscher in his *Sinnepoppen* (Meaningful figures) of 1614 to endow common utensils of everyday life with symbolic meanings (Visscher 1949). The master of the genre was, once more, Jacob Cats with his famous emblem book *Sinne-en minnebeelden* (Meaningful pictures and pictures on love).



26. Emblem 'Iovis omnia plena' in: Roemer Visscher, *Sinnepoppen*. Amsterdam 1614.

The threefold subscriptions are connected with a *pictura* which often shows a situation in everyday life. Still, in this volume it is more the picture than the text that refers to the ordinary way of living. In the field of personal experience more is offered by the collection of 1654, *Invallende gedachten op voorvallende gelegenheden* (Incidental thoughts on accidental occasions). It shows a strong relationship to emblematics, although a great many poems are without a *pictura*. Relevant here is the probability that the origin of the poems lies not in the picture but in reality itself. The poet is prompted by something that happened, by a real incident. The subjective element seems much stronger than in the earlier poetry of this great emblem writer.

The emblematic way of thinking, which found subjects for its lessons literally everywhere, greatly furthered keen observation. Not infrequently stress is placed on the personal character of that which was seen or experienced. One example must suffice, an epigram by Jan Vos: 'When Maria Vos, my little daughter, was trundling the hoop, together with other children'

My daughter hits the hoop, and struck thus, 't will rotate:
She finds no end, but runs, till panting ends her cheering.
Through hoops, eternity children thus indicate.
The eternal may be gained by sweat and persevering.

Toen Maria Vos, mijn dochttertje, neevens andere kinderen, met de
hoepel liep spelen.

Myn dochter slaat de hoep, die door de stokslag dreit:
Zy vindt geen endt, schoon zy haar aâm ten endt komt loopen.
Zoo toont een kindt ons, door haar hoepel, d'eeuwigheidt.
Het eeuwigh is door zweet en wakkerheidt te koopen.

(Vos 1662, 474)

The lesson may be universal, and in the last line inspired by classical wisdom, but the occasion is presented as a highly individual one.

A younger contemporary of Vos was Willem Godschalck van Focquenbroch (1640-1668). He definitely was not an emblemist and even less was he inclined to write poetry for the edification of his fellow citizens. In his poetry, collected under the auspices of the muse of comedy *Thalia*, he mocks the pretentious official literature and refrains from universal pretensions; his seriousness rests in his skepticism. Yet even he is unable to withdraw altogether from the emblematic way of thinking. He, too, observes and meditates and thus paints, for instance, an autobiographical genre portrait, in imitation of the French poet Saint-Amant but astonishingly well applicable to himself as we know from other evidence:



27. Pieter Codde, *Young man with a pipe (Melancholy)*, ca. 1628-1630.

Spes mea fumus est (My hope is smoke)

As I sit here and smoke my pipe beside the hearth
My face reflecting gloom and looks cast down to earth,
An elbow 'neath my head, my mind seeks explanation
Why I am plagued by fate with so much aggravation.
It is my hope (that lasts, extending day by day
Though ne'er I saw it bring good that remained to stay)
That pledges me: soon comes the fortune you awaited,
So that I feel above Rome's emperors elevated.
But when the smoking weed to dust and ash is burned
I'm to the state wherein I erstwhile was, returned.
And as I see the smoke thus vanish in the air
I say I cannot find the slightest difference there:
Whether I live and hope, or smoke my pipe in quiet:
The one's but sighing wind, the other fire that died.

Wyl ick, dus sit, en smooock een Pijppen aen de haert,
 Met een bedruockt gelaet, de oogen na de aerd,
 d'Een elboogh onder 't Hooft, soeck mijn gedacht de reden
 Waerom 't geval my plaeght met so veel straffigheden?
 De hoop daer op, (die my vast uytstelt dach, aen dach,
 Schoon dat ick nooyt yet goets van al mijn hoopen sach)
 Belooft my wederom haest tot mijn wensch te koomen:
 En maeckt my grooter als een Keyser van Out Romen.
 Maer nauw ist smooockend kruyd't verbrant tot stof, en asch,
 Of 'k vind my in die standt daer ick voor dees' in was.
 En nauw sie ick de roock in yd'le lucht verswinden,
 Of 'k segh, dat ick in 't minst geen onderscheyt kan vinden,
 In, of ick leef of hoop, of dat 'k een pypje smooock;
 Want 't een is niet als windt, en 't ander niet als roock.

(Focquenbroch s.d., 123)

Thus everyday reality also penetrated lyric poetry by way of the emblematic procedure of observation and meditation. This, however, was not the only route and not even the first and main one. The fact is, of course, that lyric is often the poetry of the self, and however much one wants to present that self as the universal representative of mankind or at least of a group of people, it is almost inevitable that it will exhibit traits of the personality of the poet. Reality gets a chance not only from didacticism, therefore, but also from personal experience. Bredero afforded an outstanding example, but also Vondel, the universalist poet par excellence remembers in a poem on the death of his little daughter Saartje how she used to trundle the hoop, play on the swings or shoot marbles (Vondel III 1929, 396-97). And even in the poetry of Hooft, whose custom it was to erase all autobiographical traces from his work before it was published, we find an instance where he allows a very real memory of a nice cuddle on the back seat of a carriage to slip in (Hooft 1899, 46-47).

The way in which Huygens brings his own reality into his verse is clearly more premeditated. His verse is meant for his friends with whom he is wont to have informal but high-level conversations in a relaxed tone. From his own descriptions we get to know him rather well as a personality. He depicts himself, for instance, as an indefatigable writer, who, whenever his official business leaves some room for relaxation, immediately turns to producing verse, a man who uses every free moment for writing in an almost compulsive way, even on horseback. The consequence as one rightly surmises, is restlessness at nighttime, too. Huygens regularly reports nights filled with brooding and feverish dreams. We come to know him as an irritable man who knew his own worth, as a good friend to his friends and a loving though slightly overbearing father.

Above all he appears as a deeply religious man. When he describes how he sees himself as a guest at the Lord's Supper, the picture may be recognizable to

any Christian, but it is first of all Huygens who meditates in a most private way from a personal religious experience (see appendix p. 160). Huygens lets himself be intimately known in this devout vein (“Is ’t your High Feast again, and did you re-invite me?”). But he did not use his poetry programmatically to explore his surroundings or his day-by-day experiences in a really thorough and exhaustive way. His daily life is not incorporated in his verse, with a small number of exceptions. He gives us, for instance, a detailed report of an outing, which relates even the exact dates of its occurrence in the title, ‘Uitwandeling van 23 augustus tot 4 september 1669’ (Excursion from August 23rd to September 4th, 1669) (Huygens VII 1897, 289-290). The poem fits well into his *poésie parlante* for friends, with room for an amusing report without much of pointedness, profoundness or educational value, but nicely told.

The anti-idealist poetics of Jan Six van Chandelier

An almost systematic exploration of the poet’s own personality, however, is to be found in the works of Jan Six van Chandelier (1620-1697). Like Bredero, Six chose to do this as a matter of principle. He deliberately rebelled against the poetics of universality with what he considered its overblown pretensions. In his work empiricism takes the central position and he claimed the superficiality of everyday life to be a legitimate subject for poetry.

In his verse the main thing is not the lesson to be drawn, but the lived-through experience. He is as much interested in his own personality as in his entourage in the restricted and the broad sense of the word: his family, his friends, Amsterdam, the countries he traveled in. His poems enable us to construct an almost complete picture of their author. The following biographical data are derived solely from the poems of his volume *Poësy* (1657). He is the firstborn son in a family of ten children, and as a spice merchant he is the provider for the large family after his father died at a rather early age. After a love affair that ended in failure he remained a bachelor. For commercial reasons he traveled to southern Europe — France, Spain and Italy — and also to England. But we are also made witness to a number of small details. Six reports how he almost shot himself accidentally with a rusty pistol, how he suffered excruciating pains from enlargement of the spleen and lay writhing, like a letter Z, on his bed, and even how he had to make a quick exit when he was plagued by severe diarrhea. He tells us how, as a boy, he took money from the till, and how at the Latin school he was called “little Jan”, to distinguish him from his namesake, the later mayor Jan Six, — who was to be painted by Rembrandt — and who was called “big Jan”.

He is really at his best whenever he can use such everyday experiences to confront his readers unexpectedly with their own customary, all-too-easy patterns of thinking. In a highly refined manner he does so in the following poem, product of his travels to the South. Again his own experience is the pivot point.

Beggar music in Toulouse

What early cocks of morn
Are crowing in my porch, into my lazy bed
To press, quite without need, on me that here is dawn?
What? Did the Sun reach out and grasp his bridle yet?

Oh no! My ears are erring.
It's not a crowing cock, it seems the sweeter sound
Of strings. But how would strings here happen to be stirring?
My sleep has been too short: morn is not yet around.

My ears are drunk, I say,
From sleep. And yet I wake, talk, hear fiddling and all.
Away, dark curtains! Look: there is the Sun's display
In neighbor's window panes and high upon the wall.

Where did I go to sleep?
Was it not in Toulouse, the city praised so dearly
Second of France's towns. Didn't I slumber deep
Here, in this room, not used to violins so early?

One reads in learned books
Of such, who, deep in dreams, get up as if awake
And talking walk about, explore crannies and nooks.
— I still doubt if my brains hear only dreams, a fake.

But hush, the strings begin
To make with every stroke a louder, stronger sound
As if to pierce my ears and get still deeper in,
Enticing me away from the warm nest I'd found.

Now I see clearly: Frenchies,
Bums of the fiddling kind, beggars as one describes
In Paris, during meals; these with their sprightly dances
Are begging 'for Gods sake'; thus praying I arise.

Up sluggard, seek some sovereigns
Of Swedish metal, or seek pennies, clipped and marked.
Go, prompt as almoner this piteous bunch to move on.
With charity at dawn, one makes a holy start.

Beedelmusyk, te Tholouse

Wat vroege morgenhaanen
Doorkraaijen myn poortaal, en luije leedekant,
Om my den dageraad onnoodigh te vermaanen?
Hoe? nam de Son dan reeds syn breidels, in de hand?

O Neen, myn ooren droomen,
Dit lykt geen haanekeel, maar eer een harmony
Van snaaren. Hoe zou hier gespeel van snaaren koomen?
Myn slaapen viel te kort, 't is noch geen daghgety.

Zoo zyn myn ooren dronken
Van slaap. Nochtans ik waak, en praat, en hoor geveel.
Wegh donkere gardyn. Sie daar de sonne pronken,
In glas, van 's buurmans huis, aan 't opperste kanteel.

Waar seegh ik op dees pluimen?
Was 't in Tholouse niet, de tweede steedekroon,
Van Vrankryks grootste steên? placht ik hier niet te sluimen,
In dit vertrek, zoo vroege geen violons gewoon?

Men leest in wyse boeken,
Van diepe droomers, die, als wakker, 't duistre bed
Verlieten, praatende, en doorsnufflende alle hoeken.
Noch twyffel ik myn brein van droomen is beset.

Hoor daar, hoor daar de snaaren
Verheffen streek, op streek, veel luider haaren trant,
Als of se dieper in myn ooren, wilden vaaren,
Om my te lokken, van de warme leedekant.

Nu sie ik wel 't zyn Fransjes,
Landloopers, beedelaars, gelyk se te Parys,
Aan taafel, viddelen: dees, met hun lichte dansjes,
Om Gods wil bidden, ik zoo biddende verrys.

Op luijaard, soek Lowysen,
Van Sweeds metaal, of soek wat stuivers, met een merk:
Gaat, als aalmoessenier, die bloedjes elders wysen.
Wie 's morgens armen troost, begint, met heiligh werk.

(Six van Chandelier 1991, 408)

What we have here is an original use of a traditional motif: the confrontation between dream and reality. That contrast has led to many a profound contemplation in literature. Six, though, is not interested at all in this philosophical aspect. He wants to stress the alienating experience of awakening in foreign surroundings, and he describes this with great subtlety in the various stages of growing clear-headedness. When he finally is fully awake and has found out what caused the disturbance of his sleep, he gets rid of the beggars by throwing them some worthless

change — “Swedish metal” is copper, and marked pennies are worthless. And in this way, the pious closing lesson is completely at variance with the foregoing lines: a beautiful example of “a self-consuming artefact” in Stanley Fish’s sense. In principle, this even means the end of emblematic poetics with its all-too-easy readiness to draw lessons from experience. For this author nothing works easily and automatically. Poet and reader alike should be on the alert both for reality and for its interpretation in poetry.

With this double-edged manifestation of a realistic poetics Six van Chandelier remained a solitary in Dutch Golden Age literature, and even in a European context he cuts an original figure with his deliberate and well-considered intention to extend the range of literature in such a way that the everyday life of an ordinary merchant might be a rightful part of it. The value of his empirical poetry, however, rests on the reader’s preparedness to be on the lookout for the pitfalls of an easy acceptance of superficial reality.

His new way found little following. The dominant position of Vondel, the influential exponent of the universalist concept of poetry, left little room for other possibilities. But the picture of Golden Age literature is surely incomplete if one does not consider the non-idealist tendencies as presented in the works of Bredero, Huygens, Focquenbroch and Six van Chandelier. All of these poets showed a certain distrust of the universalist poetics. They never mention divine inspiration, extraordinary talent or eternal poetic glory. The notion that a poet might be able to teach his fellow men was certainly not absent from their minds, but rather than using lessons that were offered by mythology, history, ethics and religion, they drew from experience, their own and that of others. And Six van Chandelier draws the final conclusion that even experience must be looked at with the utmost distrust. Scholars who overlook this colorful realist vein in Dutch poetry offer a much too homogeneous picture, as if the poetry of the period were limited to a serious, almost depressing didacticism in the classical and Christian tradition.

V

Moral landscapes



The relation between nature and literature may be studied by taking as a starting point the parallelism between painting and literature, as was done for ‘genre’ in the previous chapter. Dutch seventeenth-century landscape painting, it hardly needs to be repeated, has become world famous. In comparison, Dutch literature dealing with nature seems to have less to offer, and understandably so. Landscape painting developed into a full-blown genre of its own, which might sometimes carry symbolical overtones but which had as its main purpose the depiction of nature, albeit in an idealizing way. In literature, describing nature or landscape never is an end in itself, but always serves another objective. The description of nature has argumentative power and often a didactic slant. For this reason its first objective actually never is a true-to-life rendering. Often this has earned literature a reproach. Critics became annoyed by the foreign-looking classical scenes like mountains and fast-fleeting streams — nowhere to be found in the Netherlands — or by the use of mythological names in what are supposed to be Dutch surroundings. But anyone passing such criticism on the basis of a desire for realism, is asking the authors for something they did not set out to give. Like all other poets, those writing on nature and landscape first and foremost continued to play their role as educators. If a comparison between painting and literature in this field is only made to weigh the relative grade of realism, the art of writing, which primarily is not visual but conceptual, is done wrong.

Karel van Mander

In this connection a short look at the work of Karel van Mander, an artist from the beginning of the Golden Age, should be instructive. He was both a poet and a painter. This double talent comes to fascinating expression in his manual for aspiring painters, written in the form of a poem, *Den grondt der edel vry schilder-const* (Basics of the noble and free art of painting), first published in 1604. His eighth chapter deals with landscape. Van Mander's orientation here is a traditional literary one. For him, in accordance with the old commonplace of townspeople, nature is a place for recreation and the chapter is, therefore, offered to budding painters as a pastime "to relieve the mind". Pastoral elements play their parts with references to Vergil's eclogues. The form he chose is in keeping with this view. The reader is immediately struck by the high-flown literary manner in which the journey through the landscape begins. The pupils are told to be wide awake at daybreak in order to witness the dawn. One would expect that the young painters would first be urged to study the sunrise by close physical observation. In fact, Van Mander instructs them to think in terms of mythological imagery:

First see how there, out of her saffron bed,
The bride of old Tithonus is arising,
Announcing that the torch of day is near;
And next, how, washed in th'oceanic pond,
Four neighing, piebald horses are emerging.
Lo, and behold how slowly rosy-rimmed
The purple clouds become, how nobly trimmed
Is Eurus' clear house, to welcome Phoebus.

Merckt alvooren, uyt haer bedde saffranich
Des ouden Titons Bruydt ginder opstijghen,
Die ons de dagh-fackels comst is vermanich,
En ghewasschen in 't ghewat Oceanich,
Vier schillede Peerden op comen hijghen,
En siet, wat bloey-roosighe soomen krijghen
Die purper wolckskens, hoe schoon is behanghen
T'clær huys van Eurus, om Phoebum t'ontfanghen.

(Van Mander 1973, 204)

It is only after this highly self-conscious literary start that more factual observations are in order, and Van Mander now draws attention to some particularly striking details, which show that this poet-painter, if he so wishes, is very well able to give a visual impression:

Yonder behold those huntsmen with their dogs
 Walking the verdant, dewdrop-laden fields.
 See how the trodden dew tells a clear tale,
 And with a greener green gives indication,
 Showing their tracks, of the men's destination.

Siet ginder voor ons die Jaghers met Honden
 Loopen door die groen overdouwde velden:
 Ay siet dien gheslaghen douw ons vermelden,
 En met een groender groente hun beclappen,
 Alwaer sy henen zijn, aen 't spoor der stappen.

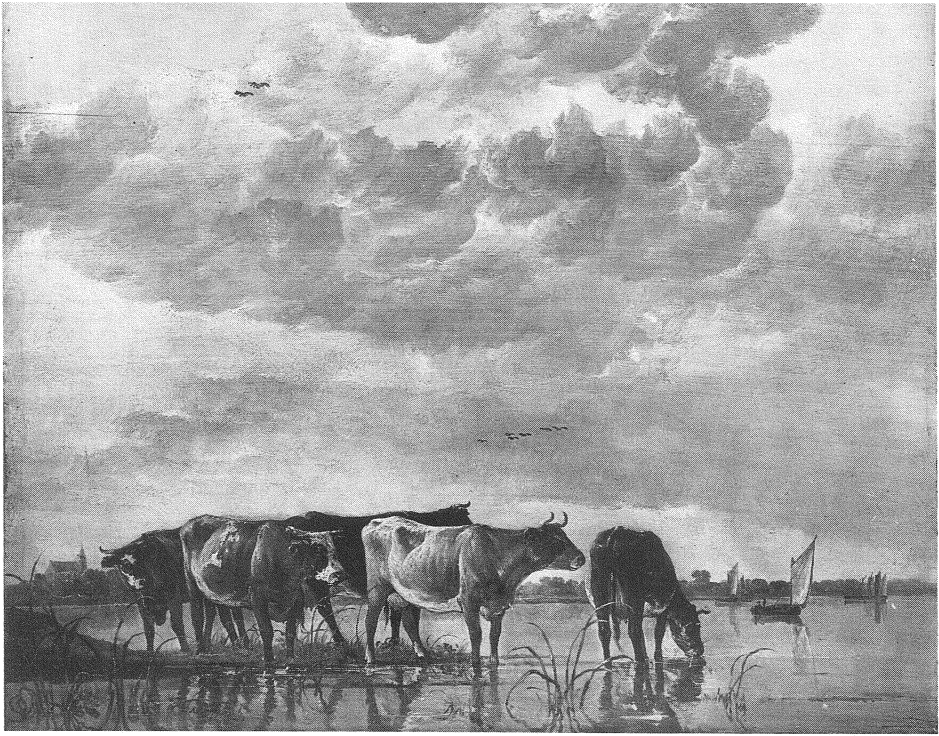
(Van Mander 1973, 204)

Didaxis

The way in which Van Mander works continues to be characteristic for many literary portrayals of nature. The objective is not realistic description, but the evocation of the meaning of a landscape. If necessary, mythology may play a part here, and it may well be desirable to incorporate non-Dutch landscape elements in order to convey the intended effect of a *locus amoenus*, for example. This does not imply that the writers were incompetent observers. Enough literary descriptions of Dutch landscapes exist to belie this suggestion. The beginning of the second book of Spiegel's *Hart-spieghel*, for instance, reads as follows:

Thalia lead us out by Amsterlandic streams
 To see the novel robe of the wet fields and orchards
 Whose gaily light-green leaves all of a sudden burst
 From swelling, gravid buds out of the dry-skinned branches.
 The grass that in the autumn sank under layers of ice
 Now raises pointed heads that pierce the water's surface.
 The field, a while ago still an abounding lake,
 Shows its rough edges now, its colors are returning.
 Where long the darting fish played to their hearts' content
 Soon cattle full of milk will daily be sent grazing.
 They loathe the musty hay and long for the fresh pastures
 That offer better feed, melting to fat and butter.

Taal-leye leid ons uyt, langs d'Amsterdamse stromen.
 t'Anschouwen t' nieuwe kleed, van t'natte veld en bomen:
 Diens vrolik-bleke-lof, drong plotselijcken uyt
 (Met swanger knoppen bol) der takken dorre huyd:
 En tgras dat onder t'ijs in d'Herrefst was gheweken,
 Begon zijn Spichtigh hoofd door twater op te steken:



28. Aelbert Cuyp, *Cattle in a river*.

Het veld dat korts noch scheen een water rijke Meer,
 De ruighe kantten toond', en kreegh zijn verwe weer:
 Daar lang de spertel-vis na lust had ghaan vermayen,
 Daar zoumen alle daagh melkrijke besten wayen:
 Dien walght het doffe hoy, en tochten zeer na tveld
 Dat beter voedt: tot vett en grazich zuivel, smelt.

(Spiegel 1930, 61-62)

Here the poet does evoke a typically Dutch, wet landscape. In spring the flooded low-lying grassland dries up again. Strikingly, however, the past, although no longer visible and therefore unattainable for a painter, is drawn into the description. Indeed, the poet specifically intends to stress the changes that are occurring. The description actually serves as an introduction for the subsequent argument in which Spiegel contemplates the vicissitudes of human life. For that matter, it should not come as a surprise that it is Spiegel who uses such an evidently Dutch phenomenon for his didactic purpose, since we have seen him already in the first chapter defending the native Dutch literary tradition.

The way in which Spiegel used the drying up of the grassland in spring to depict the continuous change of human existence might be called the emblematic way of looking at nature. Nature offers lessons to the good observer. Starting point of this thought was to be found in Scripture. The word from *Proverbs*, “Go to the ant, thou sluggard”, was the basis, as it were, for the many poems in which a variety of natural elements, often predominantly small ones, were used as a source of lessons. The master in this genre undoubtedly was Jacob Cats. In a poem concerning his own country estate, the *Hofgedachten op Sorghvliet* (Garden thoughts at Sorghvliet) of 1655, there seems to be nothing he sets eyes on from which he does not extract a lesson, whether it be an ant, a snail, or a ploughing farmer. “Recently I saw” is often the opening sentence of his poems and then he tells us what he saw, to what meditation his observation led him and to what instructive, often religious conclusions he came. All of nature for him had become a vast emblem book.

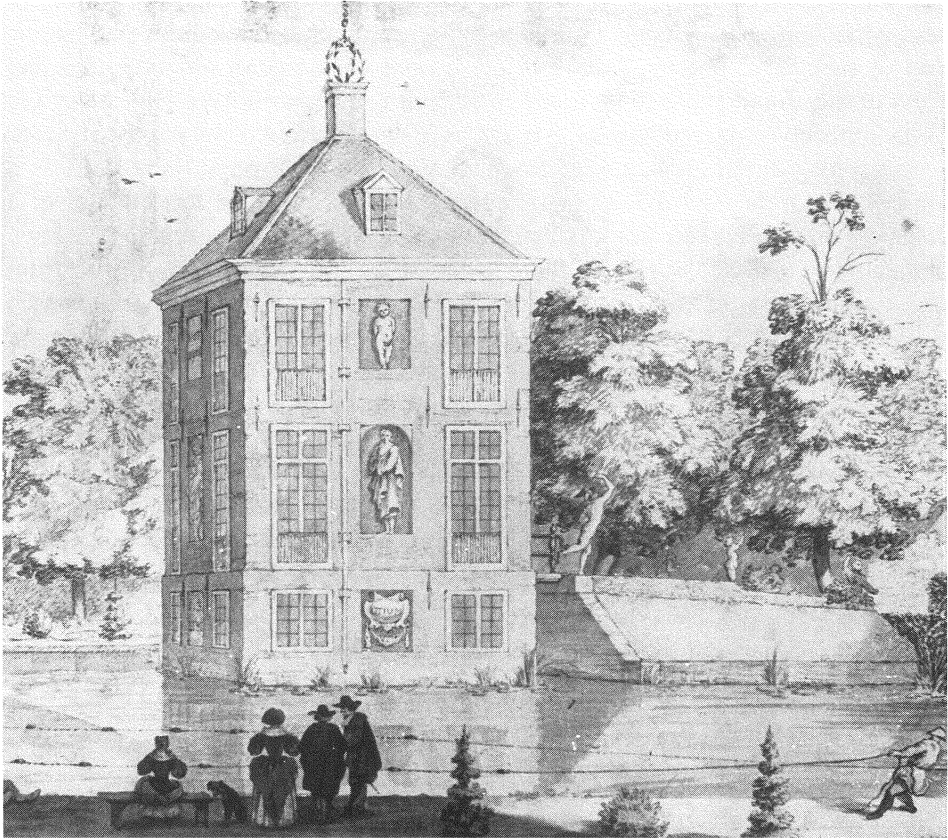
Nor was Cats the only one. In effect no writer was able to dissociate himself from this didactic way of looking at nature. In his *Buiten-leven* (Country life) (1668) the preacher-poet Willem Sluiter summarizes this manner of thinking as follows:

There's scarce a thing here, that we see,
That cannot a fair symbol be
Of something of a nobler kind.
This pleases and improves man's mind.
One may from birds, beasts, herbs and trees,
Even from gnats, from ants and bees
Draw lessons that are, in all parts,
Sweet and instructive to our hearts.

Al wat by na hier komt voor d'oogen,
Kan haest een Sinne-beelt vertogen
Van d'een of d'ander goede saek,
Te saem tot stichting en vermaeck.
Men mag uit boomen, kruiden, dieren,
Ja selfs uit muggen, mieren, sieren,
Veel lessen trekken, die heel soet
En leersaem zijn voor elks gemoet.

(Sluiter 1958, 93)

Another scriptural passage, “The heavens are telling the glory of God” (*Ps.* 19), leads to an equally important way of reading “the book of nature”. Contemplation of the beauty of the Creation induces admiration of the omnipotence of the Creator. This had also been written into the creed of the Reformed churches where it calls the world “as a beautiful book in which all creatures, great and small, are like to letters that reveal to us the invisible attributes of God, namely



29. Anonymus, *Constantijn Huygens with visitors at 'Hofwyck'*, ca. 1675.

his eternal power and Godhead.” This thought, moreover, is not limited to the churches of the Reformation but is rooted deeply in Christian Antiquity and the Middle Ages.

The book of nature can be read in very different ways. One is struck, for instance, by the secularized manner in which Huygens deals with this topic in the country house poem he wrote on his own property *Hofwyck* (1651). The principal words used in the passage concerned are the ever repeated “we know”. If we read well in nature’s book we know how the cosmos is put together from the stars, the sea, the earth and all things that grow and live upon it, including the greatest wonder of all: man himself. Rather than to the creating God, nature here seems to refer to the knowing human being. Even the simile, derived from Kepler and later

very popular, in which the world is compared to a clockwork, comes into play: the father of Christiaan Huygens, inventor of the pendulum clock, professes to know every tiny cogwheel of nature's clockwork. To Huygens, the Calvinist, nature undoubtedly was God's creation, but nevertheless his view marks the beginning of a new type of thinking. The main thing is not to discover the lesson in an emblematic way but rather to uncover truths — in this case scientific ones — empirically. This constitutes a parallel to the trend, signalled in the previous chapter, toward a growing interest in personal experience.

Great wonders from this Book we're able to narrate.
 Though there are many stars, their numbers we can state
 And size, and distance too; whether the changeful moon
 Goes bare, or masked, or veiled with nebulous festoon,
 Or ducks below our sight, she can't give us the slip,
 We know the meaning of her every spot and pip;
 Of any ring she shows; we know of which she's ailing
 Whenever she turns gold, or when again she's paling.
 When from the eastern high, dawn starts her southbound trek,
 We know the cause of it; whether the sky turns black
 And weeps now here, then there, or sets itself aflame
 And rolls as if the blue in fragments downward came,
 Or sheds its tears again, to quench the fires it started,
 Or smiles on herbs and beasts to show it is kind-hearted,
 Whether the state 't is in makes that we sigh or sing,
 The clockwork's known to us, with every cog and spring.

Wij weten wonderen uijt dit Boeck te vertellen.
 All zijn de Sterren veel, wij wetense te tellen,
 Te passen op een' mijl; all loopt de losse Maen
 Dan bloots hoofs, dan gehult, dan met een masker aen,
 All duijckt sij voor ons oogh, sij kan ons niet ontslippen,
 Wij weten wat sij meent met plecken en met tippen,
 Met ringen en met geen; wij weten wat haer schort
 Wanneer se somtijds goud en somtijds silver wordt.
 All krimpt de dageraad van 'tooster punt naer 'tzuijen,
 Wij weten waer 'them lieght: all pruijlt de Locht met buijen,
 All huylt sij gins en weer, all stelts' haer self in vlam,
 All rommelts' of 'tblauw dack van boven neder quam,
 All schreijtsse weer daerop en lescht haer' eigen' vieren,
 All lachtse datelick met Cruijden en met dieren,
 Dien haer gestalteniss tot lust en onlust wendt;
 Van all dat uer-werck zijn de veeren ons bekend.

(Huygens 1977, 169)

His friend Westerbaen shows even greater fascination with the sciences. A visit to a "naturalist" is to him an utterly astounding experience:

He takes me to the glass of strong magnification
Which shows among the dust of cheese-mite infestation
A marching regiment, a thousand heads or more
That on my bread-knife's tip I'd laden just before.

Hy brengt my tot de proef door het vergrootend glaesje,
Waer door ick in het stof en 't mytren van myn kaesje
Kan sien een regiment van duysend koppen gaen,
Die ick op 't puntje van een brood-mes had gelaen.

(Westerbaen 1657, 168-169)

In the early eighteenth century this way of looking at nature was followed by the so-called physical theology which scored real triumphs in literature. Nature no longer offers separate emblematic examples but refers as a whole and with all its grandeur and, especially, complexity to the Creator. Many poets now actually started to sing the newly made discoveries by which God's greatness might be demonstrated. Unfortunately — from the point of view of literature — it was not a poet but the biologist Jan Swammerdam who characterized these efforts most tersely when he wrote to a colleague: "Here I present you the Almighty Finger of God in the anatomy of a louse".

The countryside that offered so many lessons and referred so directly to God thus acquired an increasing number of positive connotations. Biblical and classical traditions contributed to this. In paradise man still had been without sin and it was the countryside where, according to the classical myth, Astraea, the goddess of justice, had set her last footsteps before leaving the earth altogether. The opposition city-country received great ethical weight. Against the greed and corruption of the big city, the peaceful simplicity of the country stands out radiantly. Originally, this opposition was classical, but in the Republic it acquired a new topicality. As a result of the fast growth of the cities, Amsterdam in the first place, the well-to-do went looking for peace and recreation in the countryside, and their "flight" required legitimation.

The pre-eminent classical poem on the opposition city-country is Horace's second epode "Beatus ille". In Dutch literature, this text has been adapted in many ways, always with the point that the man from the country with his simple sense of well-being knows more of true happiness than the city dweller who is always pursuing wealth and glory. The ironical closing lines of Horace's poem, showing that the speaker, a usurer himself, finally prefers to take up his lucrative urban existence again, are ignored in most Dutch versions. The single exception is the farmer-poet Hubert Korneliszoon Poot from the early eighteenth century, who knew from experience that life in the country does not solely consist of unadulterated bliss. In his 'Akkerleven' (Field life), one of the best-known poems in Dutch literature, he includes a fair dose of irony when he describes how pitch-

fork, rake, shovel and spade are the heart's desire of the farmer and how his "seven children and a wife" are his "daily pastime" (Poot s.d., 41-44).

Pastoral poetry also fostered the opposition city-country or court-country on ethical grounds. The sincere simplicity of the shepherd contrasts with the corrupt existence of courtiers. Hooft's *Granida* (1605) and Cats's *Aspasia* (1656), both pastoral plays, touch on this theme.

The country house poem

In 1584 the Leyden professor Justus Lipsius, who originally came from the Southern Netherlands, published his dialogue *De constantia*. With this book he not only became the most important popularizer of neostoic philosophy, but he also set the tone for the praise of the garden. In the beginning of the second section, Lipsius and his interlocutor find themselves in the latter's garden, just outside Louvain, and talk about the art of horticulture. Praise is accorded to gardeners from Antiquity onwards. The richest and mightiest people sought recreation in gardens, to find the bliss of solitude and to meditate on the lessons to be found in the growing, flowering and wilting of the plants. Lipsius especially praises the orderliness of the paradisiacal garden (Lipsius 1983, 87-89). Throughout the Renaissance, gardens will in fact remain orderly, laid out in straight lines and strictly geometric patterns and with well marked-off beds.

The literary genre that most explicitly does justice to this well-ordered nature is that of the country house poem. Nowhere else in Europe did it flourish so abundantly as in the Northern Netherlands. The urban owners of a country house used it to portray an ideal image of themselves. Although professing a great love for the simple rural life, they did not pose as real farmers. Their model was the cultured gentleman farmer who could leave the hard and monotonous labor to servants, occupying himself with more attractive pursuits like grafting and the care of the flower and kitchen garden. Accordingly, they dwelled not in a farmstead, but on a country estate, preferably not immediately surrounded by farming or grazing land but by an orchard and an herb-and-flower garden.

Particularly under the influence of the models provided by Cats and Huygens, a *laus ruris* developed with fixed characteristics. The subject matter is the country house of the well-to-do city dweller, and the genre has the secondary purpose of indicating how one may properly enjoy this wealth. For that reason the moral value of living in the country is stressed. The garden occupies the central position, especially the useful, productive part: the kitchen garden and the orchard. In the turn of the seasons, nature's course is observed, particularly as a source of lessons. Again and again it is suggested that pre-eminently those who live in such country

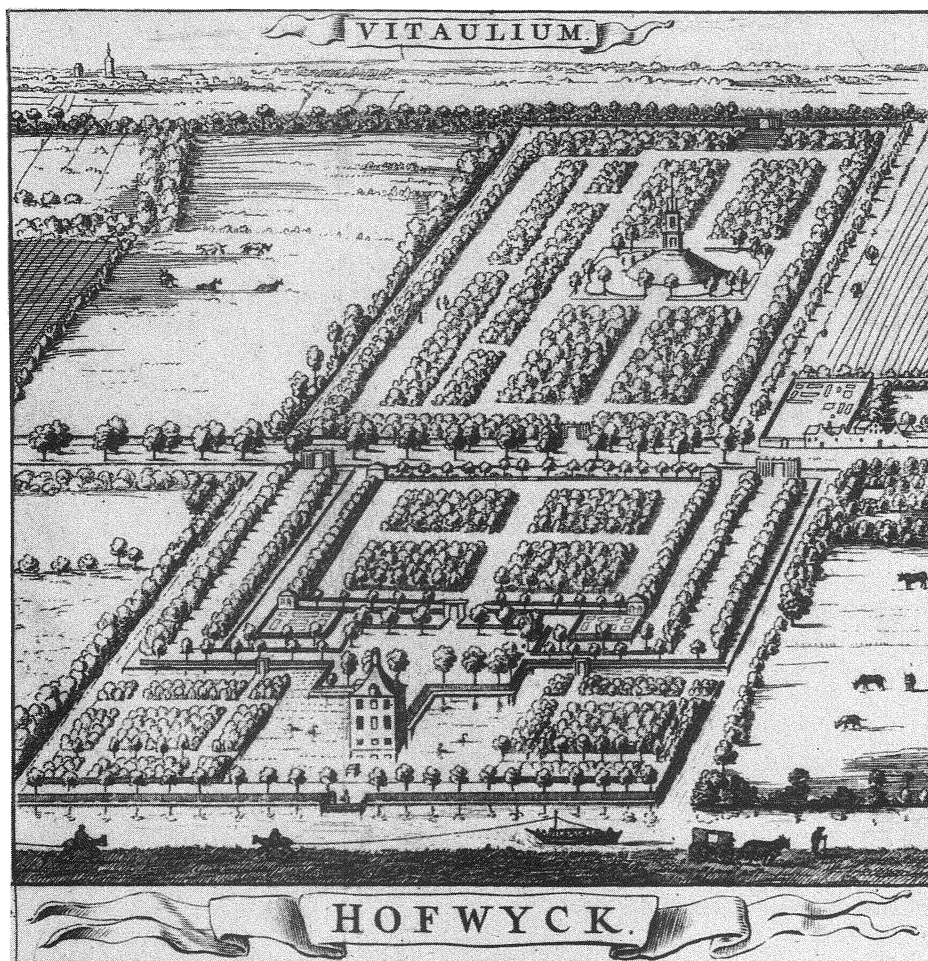
houses are the ones who occupy themselves with the edifying emblematic contemplation and scientific observation of nature. In doing so, they actually link up with a classical tradition, for in Vergil's *Georgics* II it is already the major privilege of the countryman to study the *causas rerum*. Furthermore, much attention is given to the anorganic furnishings of the estate: the statues and fountains, the summer houses and arbors. Sometimes even industry can be alluded to, as in the eighteenth century poem *Zydebalen* (Bales of silk), the name of the Utrecht country house of David van Mollem where a little stream was harnessed to drive a silk factory. In this case it was not the owner who praised his estate, as was the custom in the seventeenth century, but a poet, Arnold Hoogvliet, who had been engaged to perform this duty.

The tone also changes in these commissioned poems. Huygens had portrayed his life as an estate owner with some detachment, even touching briefly on the problematic phenomenon of living in wealth in the country. In an attractive passage in *Hofwyck* (which means literally "retirement from the court"), the poem on his little weekend castle lying on the small Vliet river in the village of Voorburg near The Hague, he lets passing outsiders have their say about the estates springing up all around. It causes damage to nature — already an actual problem in that age —, while in point of fact the ordinary people have to pay the costs:

Another castle yet, raised in a single night!
 I guess the Vliet will be a street eventually.
 Ere long, The Hague won't know whether its place will be
 At Voorburg or the dunes: they're fools, conceited, too,
 Who loathe the city so, the Hague just will not do.
 Too narrow are the streets, too short the promenade.
 [...]
 Does Voorburg have to join? I do recall the day
 This was a clover field, where thriving cattle lay.
 A garden, it looks now, a Hofwijck, I'll be damned.
 We go to nothing, while those people grow too grand.
 They're scraping left and right, their minds just set on wealth.

All weer een new Casteel in eenen nacht geresen!
 'Kschick endelick de Vliet sal worden tot een' straat,
 Den Haegh sal metter tijd niet weten waer hij staet,
 Te Voorburgh, of aen duijn: siet die verweende gecken,
 Sij walghen vande stadt; den Haegh en kan niet strecken,
 De straten zijn te nauw, de wandeling te kort,
 [...]
 Moet Voorburgh me in 'tspell? 'k magh heugen dat die weij
 Voll klare klaver stond, vol vette beesten leij;
 Nu is 't een Hof, quansuijs, een Hofwijck: wel, waerachtigh,
 Wij moeten inden grond, het volkje wordt te prachtigh,
 Sij schrapen 'tgoed bijeen, slinx of rechts, 'tscheelt haer niet.

(Huygens 1977, 242-43)



30. 'Hofwyck'. Engraving belonging to the poem in Constantijn Huygens, *Koren-bloemen*. 's-Gravenhage 1672.

Unlike Lipsius, this critic does not think the orderly garden an improvement over the original nature:

With or without God's will, so black must be each path
 The baldest dune's surpassed in scarcity of grass.
 The hoe receives no rest, there is the constant pinch
 Of spudding till one's sick; well may the gardener flinch
 If weeds show rampant growth, due to a spell of wet.
 [...]
 And then, as if to tax God's patience, they take pains
 As if they're short of work, to raise hills from the plains.
 It's nothing but minced land and little ponds we see.
 He is the greatest man who spoils most skilfully.

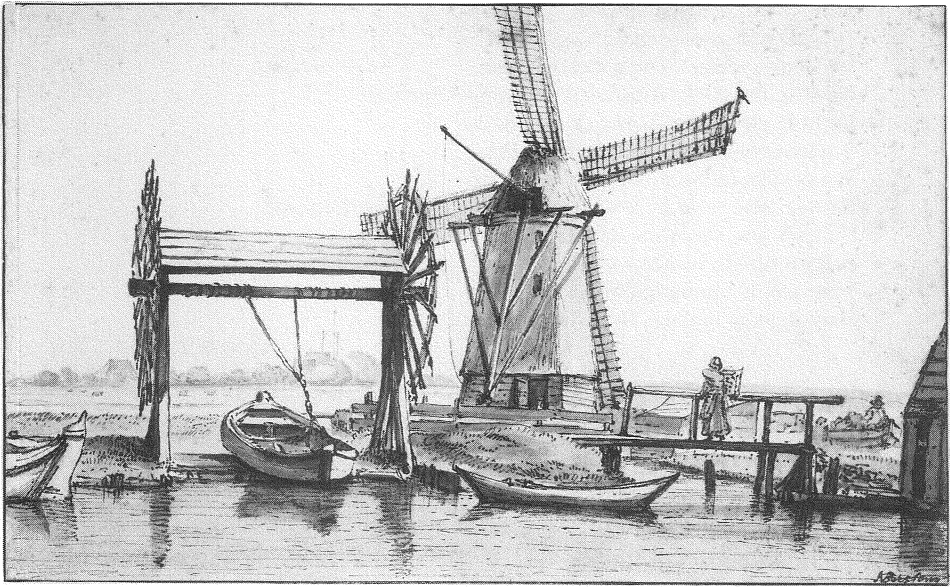
Of 't God belieft of niet, de paden moeten bruijn
 En kaler zijn van gras als 'thooghste van een dijn:
 De schoffel heeft geen rust; daer is een eewigh leven
 Van wijen dat men berst: de thuijnman magh wel beven,
 Soo 'tonkruijd meester werdt door weelde van natt weer.
 [...]
 En om Gods lijdsaemheid met alle macht te tergen,
 Als offer werck gebrack, van vlackte maecktmen bergen.
 'tLand wordt tot vijvertiens versnipperd en gekerft,
 En 'tis de braefste mann die 'tkonstelixt bederft.

(Huygens 1977, 244-45)

In most country house poems, however, there is not a trace of criticism left. The poets commissioned to write such a poems take care not to irritate the rich owners and the tone usually is very sugary. The estate is duly admired and the inhabitant receives the compliment of being very wise and unpretentious in his wish to lead the contemplative life in the country.

Water

Besides the contrast of city and country, there is another momentous opposition: that of land vs. water. In his recent book *The Embarrassment of Riches* Simon Schama has even chosen the importance of the struggle against the water as the guiding principle for his investigation of Dutch culture. The quantity of water in Dutch literature does not seem to sustain this view, but still some telling instances may be found. In lyrical poetry controlled rivers and charming brooks, often populated with the obligatory little naiads and with trees reflected in the unruffled



31. Anthonie van Borssom, *A portage and a mill near Amsterdam*.

surface, form a recurrent pleasant setting. A more unusual feature is that a natural occurrence like rain may obtain a moral dimension. Rainfall and life in Holland go together, but in that age heavy rainfall could be a serious threat to the prosperity of many people. Jan Six van Chandelier expressed this in evocative language in his poem 'Op langdurigen regen' (On long-lasting rain) of which I quote here a fragment:

Relentless fell the chilly rain
 For weeks on fields, on fruits and grain.
 The blessed summer crop lies wasted.
 Holland looks like Brazil, by winter downpours basted.
 The farmer's erstwhile hopes are foiled.
 His flattened harvest is now spoiled.
 His ducks float now where he'd been sowing.
 They 're quacking where he sang when mowing.
 The cows to which the shed's now strange
 Moo sadly and dislike the change.
 I guess the hungry hearts feel bilked
 That they must in the sheds be milked.

Maar 't koude reegnen week, aan week,
 Op weiland, graan, en ooftgequeeck,
 Verslenst, vernielt den soomerseegen.
 Ons Neerland lykt Brasil, gequelt van winterreegen.
 De boer, vol hoops korts, staat bedodt,
 Syn landvrucht leit, op 't land, en rot,
 Syn eenden lobbren, langhs 't gesaaide,
 En quaaken, waar hy songh, wanneer hy voormaals maaide.
 De koei, nu ongewoon de schuur,
 Balkt treurigh, luister, och! hoe suur,
 Moet aan het hongrigh beest wel vallen,
 Haar melk te melken uit de leeghgegeete stallen.

(Six 1991, 253)

This poem belongs in the series mentioned earlier in which the heavy rainfall in the peace year 1648 was morally and politically interpreted by various poets. At the end of his poem Six gives the bad weather a religious application: we should consider the rain as a warning and therefore repent of our sins.

Without any such moral interpretation the poet Joachim Oudaan describes a heavy squall, although it might not be accidental that he does so in a little sequence of poems in which he discusses works of art, in the present case 'Downpour and rainbow' by Pieter de Neyn. The sister art was exemplary, after all.

Friend Neun, loving landscape painting, in the fields seeks his repair.
 Soon he sees the sun is paling and upset is the sweet air;
 Soon he sees the clouds are mounting, which forebodes a heavy squall,
 And already he feels droplets and the rain threatens to fall.
 Now and then the sun comes peeking, but so watery and wan
 That it would appear no different from the river's sallow tan.

Neun, die gare landschap teikent, geeft sig naer het open velt:
 Strak siet hy de Son verbleiken, en de soete lugt ontstelt:
 Strak siet hy de wolken klimmen (voor-spook van een sware buy):
 Met soo voelt hy drop op dropje: (dreiging van een regen-ruy).
 Somtyts geeft de Son een blikje, maer soo bleik en waterig,
 Datse effe schynt te komen aen den bruinen waterdrig.

(Oudaan II 1712, 129-130)

And in this way Oudaan recounts the whole picture in an anecdotal manner.

In all sorts of ways the hate-love relationship of the Dutch with the water is reflected in literature. The land was wrested from the waves and particularly in the seventeenth century when new polders were being reclaimed, the land was gaining the upper hand in its struggle against the "water-wolf". On the Beemster polder, north of Amsterdam, Vondel wrote a colorful poem for the rich land-owner Karel Looten:

The Wind-prince, to placate the grief of Holland's maid,
 Since storm and gales caused her much damage and erosion,
 Donned windmills' sails and pumped and through long turning made
 The Beemster a fair lea, as lake drained into ocean.
 Surprised, the sun beheld how waves left brackish clay
 Which it then dried and decked with a fair emerald sheet
 With flowers stitched, with crops and fruits in rich array,
 And garlanding her hair, strewed it with perfume sweet.
 A cream and butter-well sprang from her ample bust,
 The fishmeat turned to flesh, a virgin yet intact,
 The towers round her brow showed a cloud-piercing thrust
 As opulence and height each other will attract.
 Here, hounds chase after game, here carriages promenade,
 Here's dancing, banqueting, here wealthy merchants landed.
 Here smiles the Golden Age in arbors offering shade.
 No wars to cause it fright, no ships gone down or stranded.
 Recall how Cypris charmed the Cypriot braves.
 I know *this* goddess rose out of the foaming waves.

De Beemster, voor Karel Looten

De Wintvorst, om den rouw van Hollants Maaght te paeien,
 Vermits, door storm op storm, zy schade en inbreuk leê,
 Schoot molenwiecken aan, en maalde, na lang draeien,
 Den Beemster tot een beemt, en loosde 't meir in zee.
 De zon verwondert, zagh de klay noch brack van baren,
 En drooghde af, en schonkse een groenen staatsikeurs,
 Vol bloemen geborduurt, vol loven, ooft en airen;
 En, toiende heur hair, bestroide het vol geurs.
 De room en boterbron quam uit haar borsten springen.
 Het vissigh lijf wert vleesch, noch maagt, en ongerept.
 Haar voorhoofs torenkroon quam door de wolken dringen:
 Gelijck gemeenlick weelde in hoogheit wellust schept.
 Hier jaagt de winthont 't wilt. hier rijt de koets uit spelen.
 Men danst men banketteert in 's Koopmans rijke buurt.
 Hier lacht de goude tijt, in lieve lustprieelen,
 Die voor geen oorloogh schrickt, noch kiel op klippen stuurt.
 Verzier van Cypris, hoe zy Cypers quam bekoren:
 Ick weet dat dees Godin uit zeeschuim is geboren.

(Vondel IV 1930, 609)

Characteristic is the mythological and allegorical form which corresponds well with the view Vondel expresses in line 15: the reclamation of the Beemster is like a second Ovidian creation and results in a New Golden Age, one meant especially for the well-to-do. The rich merchants will use the new polder to construct country houses, and so this poem may also be read as a tribute to the patriciate. The consortium that paid for the reclamation, has created nothing less than an earthly paradise for itself.

In this case the water has been vanquished and made harmless. But in literature — as in reality — the menace prevails. When Vondel sings the events preceding the building of the Amsterdam city hall, he recounts how the great work had been thwarted many times. Envy did everything in her power to foil the construction. She even summoned the sea's assistance, and so Vondel succeeds in using as an argument in his poem the very evocative description of the breach of the dike in 1651, when the Diemermeer polder, also filled with houses for the patriciate, was flooded:

Neptune [...] spares neither dike nor piles
 Nor planks of oak, and comes just above Outewael,
 Bursting into the pastures and roaring on his oars,
 Proceeds and sinks and rises and falls in Diemen's lake,
 Puts farms and crops and cattle below the water that
 Aforetimes had been forced to leave that great expanse.
 [...]
 The haystack keeps the cattle, farmers with families
 Put through the roofs their heads, to stave off threatening death.

Neptuin [...] ontziet noch dijck, noch pael,
 Noch eicke planck, en komt u, boven Outewael,
 Geborsten in de weide, en bruizende op zijn riemen,
 Vaert voort, en zackt, en ryst, en valt in 't meer van Diemen,
 Zet hofsteên, vee, en vrucht in 't water, dat wel eer,
 Zijns ondancks, ruimen moest den boezem van zyn meer.
 [...]
 De hoybergh bergde 't vee. de droeve huisman stack,
 Met vrouwe en kindren, 't hooft gedootverft uit het dack.

(Vondel V 1930, 868)

This is a good example of the very functional use of mythology in the description of nature. The appearance of Neptune in this context is logical. If the sea is portrayed as an ally of Envy, a personification is the obvious choice.

Water in its frozen form is warned against in various emblems and prints. The *figurae* show the skater slithering or even falling into a hole in the ice. The subscriptions stress the treacherousness of the Protean element. Daniel Heinsius demonstrates this in a light-hearted vein when he shows us the problems of a skating Cupid (Heinsius 1983, 78). But notwithstanding all the lurking dangers, the Dutch poets, like their painting colleagues, depict with pleasure the fraternizing fun on frozen ponds and canals. Both Bredero and Six van Chandelier did so with contagious enthusiasm. In his comedy *Moortje* Bredero introduces a grumbling father who has little good to say of what he sees but nevertheless describes it vividly, extensively and wittily (Bredero 1984, 340-46). Six van Chandelier devotes a long passage to the pleasures of skating, golfing on the ice and sledding in his nar-



32. Emblem 'In lubrico' (Cupid skating), in: Daniel Heinsius, *Nederduytsche poemata*. Amsterdam 1616.

rative poem's *Amsterdammers winter*, which matches the icy winter landscapes by a painter like Avercamp both in power of expression and richness of detail (Six van Chandelier 1988).

Danger lurks primarily at sea, of course. The ocean carries the Dutch merchant fleet all over the world but many ships and sailors never return. Vondel sings the sea's praise in his impressive long poem *Lof der zee-vaert* of 1623 (Vondel 1987). He not only praises seafaring as such, but above all tries to place commerce and colonialism in a moral framework. A ship's story forms the basis of the discussion. It begins with the building of the ship in the port of Amsterdam, continues with its voyage over the seven seas and ends with its safe return. Is seafaring a form of human recklessness? A description of a storm at sea seems to suggest so. In the best traditions of Ovid and Vergil, supplemented by information from travelbooks, Vondel evokes a hair-raising picture of the roaring ocean. Even when the subject is something as well-known in the Netherlands as the sea, classical inspiration remains important. Evidently, Vondel does not aim at a realistic description of the sea but his picture of the storm is a topos with argumentative power: so grave are the dangers and so reckless, or so courageous, is the sailor who nevertheless ventures out:

Upon a cloudless sky, a myriad stars we see
 The sails are slack, the air seems motionless to me,
 When suddenly the wind sighs along beach and dune.
 Soon it is overcast, and clouds hide stars and moon.
 The sky pricks up its ears, and on the briny waste
 Lays down a heavy fog, by which all is encased.
 It mixes sea and air with downpours and with squalls.
 East battles against South, Northwind on Southwind falls.

Howling, the Orient provokes the Occident.
 The Noon rages and wars, Midnight weeps without end.
 The breakers pound the beach, the sandbanks and the bars.
 [...]

 Where 's rescue for my ship, in its extreme distress
 Into the maelstrom thrown, the jaws of gaping death?
 The crew is working hard with striking, bailing, pumping,
 With clutching, slashing ropes, with binding, climbing, dumping.

Den heldren Hemel dicht van sterren is besaeyt.
 De doecken hangen slap. men twijffelt of het waeyt.
 Als onverwacht de wind versucht langs 't sandige oever,
 De locht betreect, en dooft de sterren langs hoe droever.
 En steeckt syne ooren op, en gaet den Oceaan
 Met dicken nevelen bevatten, en beslaen:
 Mengt Zee, en Hemel t'saem, plasregen, en buyen.
 Het Oost is tegen 't West, en 't Noorden tegen 't Zuyen.
 Den Opgang d'Ondergang al bulderende ontseyd.
 De Middagh huylt en raest, de Middernacht die schreyd.
 De berning woed aen 't strand, op Syrten, en op platen.
 [...]

 Waer waendy blijft mijn schip ghedreven vanden Nood,
 Geworpen inden muyl, en kaecken vande dood?
 Men isser drock in 't werck met strijcken, pompen, hoosen,
 Met kerven, klutsen, slaen, met binden, klimmen, loos.

(Vondel 1987 I, 21-22)

Small wonder that the famous beginning of the second book of Lucretius' *De natura rerum* has often been adapted in Dutch literature. Even the hardened Dutch preferred to watch the sea from the safe shore. I present Hooft's rendering:

When stormwinds lash the sea and put it on the rack
 To growl and thrash about against the scudding wrack,
 A lovely sight it is to see from dune or quay
 How shipmates fight with death, down in the heavy sea.
 Though we derive no joy from someone's sorry state,
 The other's woe makes us our weal appreciate.

Door 't geesslen van den wint, wanneer de zee gemartelt
 Met grauwen, tegens 't swerk en vliënde wolken spartelt,
 Ist zoet te zien van dujn, oft haeven, af, hoe dat
 De bootsman worstelt met de doodt in 't holle nat.
 Men schept geen vreughd nochtans ujt yemant zijn bedroeven;
 Maer 'tzien van 's anders ramp doet best onz' welvaert proeven.

(Hooft 1899, 289)

Except for this type of stormy descriptions, the sea is curiously absent in Dutch literature. There seems to have been no eye for its grandeur, the cliché of the modern Dutchman who, meditating upon the top of a dune, likes to be impressed by the eternal rolling of the waves. In his almost 2000 line-long *Strande* (Seashore) (1614), the Zeeland poet Philibert van Borsselen hardly looks out at the sea and his poem consists mainly of more or less scientific descriptions of shells and sea creatures. The aim is, once more, the glorification of the Creator in Nature, as might be expected from a follower of the Calvinist French poet Guillaume du Bartas, but the sea as such does not spark off any admiration (Van Borsselen 1937, 15-67).

Even Huygens manages to trivialize the sea by using her as a source of down-to-earth lessons. In his *Zee-straet* (Road to the sea) of 1667, a poem in which he pleads for the building of a road between The Hague and the fishing village of Scheveningen, he tries to persuade young people to make a trip to the seashore. If they should have calm weather they should tell their girl friends how horribly the sea can sometimes seethe and impress on them that it is the same with themselves: they can be just as kind and just as surly as the sea. The tides permit him, as could be expected, to provide lessons about the vicissitudes of life (Huygens 1981).

I know of only one writer, a rather minor poet, who does appear to have some feeling for the seaside, the early eighteenth century author Hendrik Snakenburg, rector of the Latin school in Leyden. He had relatives in the nearby fishing village of Katwijk on the Sea, where he liked to stay and relax. The titles of his poems are unique in the Dutch literature of this period: 'Strandgezing' (Beach song), 'Onweer in zee' (Thunderstorm at sea), 'Grote stilte in zee' (Great silence at sea). His poem 'Vermaek van het meeuwen schieten by buiig weder aan zee' (Pleasure of shooting sea-gulls during blustery weather at sea) begins as follows:

The wind lashes the beach, howls fiercely where I stand
And blows into my face a very sea of sand.
The tide seethes and foams, and gusts of hail are urging
Shoreward the pelted waves, billowing, splashing, surging,
So that the brine exceeds all marks and leaves the dune
Hardly sufficient height to rise above the spume.
In such inclemency, fit to make spirits fall,
The seashore is the place I favor most of all.
A hollow in the dune with marram on each hand
Protects me from the wind and from the blowing sand.
This is the ambush where, when next the tide will rise
I'll have my rifle poised, the seagulls to surprise,
That skimming past the dunes, now on fair currents borne,
Then rising 'gainst the wind, their wings beating the storm,
I'll hit with fiery lead out of my hidden lair
And dump into the foam, like clouds out of the air.



33. Philips Wouwermans, *Dune landscape with horse and wagon*, 1660.

Wat giert de barre wind, onstuimig, langs het strand,
 En waeit my in 't gezicht een gansche zee van zand!
 Hoe vreeslyk bruischt de vloed, terwyl de hagelvlagen,
 Door 't zwepende geklets, de golven strandwaert jagen,
 En 't pekel boven peil doen zwellen tegen 't duin,
 Dat naeuwlyks boven 't schuim zich uitheft, met zyn kruin!
 Geen schuit durft van de wal: de werf zelfs, in dit woeden,
 Kan naeuwlyks, by den vloed, de schuit voor 't vlotten hoeden.
 Geen vogel kan in zee, by zulk een weer, bestaan,
 De wind dryft hem, langs 't duin, gestadig af en aen.
 In zulk een vreeslyk weer, dat ieder kan versagen,
 Kan my, tot myn vermaek, de seekant meest behagen.
 Een uitgedolven duin, met helm digt om beplant,
 Bedekt my voor den wind, en 't stuiven van het zand.
 Dit is myn hinderlaeg, om, als de vloed gaet wassen,
 Van ver, met schietgeweer, de Meeuwen te verrassen,
 Die, scherende langs 't duin, gedragen op de lucht,
 En dryvend' tegen wind, op zwaer gevlerkte vlucht,
 Dus heimlyk uit het hol, met vierig loot, getroffen,
 Als wolken uit de lucht, in 't schuimend water, ploffen.

(Snakenburg 1753, 282)

But this poet, too, contrives a didactic point and the description of his hunting pleasure at sea ends with the lesson that man desires change. Still, he is the first Dutch poet to view sea and beach as a landscape in its own right. In a fisherman's song he evokes in an Arcadian vein an evening mood on the beach:

The evening is advanced by fog, and gulls are flying,
 Disturbing my complaint by their atrocious crying.
 Cormorants, harbingers of thunderstorms, 't is known,
 Bode no good for the day I chose for coming down.

Een koude mist vervroegt den avondstond. De meeuwen
 Verstoren myn geklag, door haer afgryslyk schreeuwen.
 De scholfers, die men nooit, dan voor een onweer, zag,
 Beloven my niets goeds van myn' gewenschten dag.

(Snakenburg 1753, 365)

With such stanza's literature has finally accomplished, albeit with a delay of several decades, what to all intents and purposes may be considered an analogy to the beach scenes of the painters.

VI

Literature and the visual arts



In the Golden Age, visual artists and poets both depicted daily life and evoked images of nature. Because they did not do this in the same manner or with the same purpose, it might appear that the comparisons to be found in some of the preceding chapters amount to little more than playing with ideas. The circumstance, however, that during the Golden Age literature and the visual arts were in many respects intimately related, contradicts that view. The expression “the sister arts” has, at least in this period, a real meaning.

Sometimes both forms of art were united in a single person: Van Mander, Bredero and Heymen Dullaert were poets as well as painters. Many personal relationships also linked the two arts. Vondel counted many painters among his friends: Govert Flinck, Joachim Sandrart and Philips Koninck, for instance. In his book on Rembrandt, Gary Schwartz emphasizes the extensive networks of relationships in Amsterdam, showing a wide range of connections between poets, painters and — last but not least — patrons. This may be illustrated by a volume like the *Hollantsche Parnas* (1660). It was compiled from the works of many different poets and is notable for the fact that it contains much verse dealing with painting (Schwartz 1984, 280-282). In The Hague, the poet Huygens, an ardent art-lover himself, played an important part as a patron on behalf of the Court. The discussion in which he compares Rembrandt and Jan Lievens, as presented in his autobiography, is highly interesting and testifies to his thorough factual knowledge (Huygens 1987, 84-90).



34. Claes Janszoon Visscher, *Byrsa Amsterodamensis*. The Amsterdam Bourse in a bird's-eye view, 1612.

Artists of both professions often worked together, especially if the subject was the glorification of town or state. To give just one example: the well-known engraver Claes Jansz. Visscher made a print of the Amsterdam Bourse and Hooft wrote the accompanying epigram.

Ut pictura poesis

But the most important thing to bear in mind when considering the relationships between painting and literature is the realization that both forms of art have strong theoretical relations and corresponding aims. Contemporaries never tired of expressing this by quoting — slightly out of context — Horace's maxim "Ut pic-

tura poesis". In theoretical writings regarding both forms of art, one and the same language, based on rhetoric, was spoken. Young artists of both professions were supposed to go through the same learning process. As regards content, the material used was often educational in character, consisting, for instance, of the Bible and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The objectives were also comparable: the Horatian combination of the *utile* and the *dulce* was applicable to both forms of art. And the methods chosen to attain these objectives were also akin, as for instance that of hiding a profound subject under an attractive covering. The artists spoke the same language, therefore, and both sides tried to clarify their objectives by using examples or statements derived from the sister art.

This close relationship, however, also entailed some kind of competition between the artists. Time and again the question arises as to which art is best suited to attain the objective of instructing, entertaining and immortalizing. As the century wears on artistic preferences become better articulated. Schools arise, in literature as well in the visual arts, and allies are sought among kindred artists in the sister discipline. A discussion of some key representatives may serve to illustrate this point.

Authors

In the early 17th century Karel van Mander (born in the Southern Netherlands in 1548) is a central figure in this respect. As both a poet and a painter he demonstrated in his work the close relationship between the arts. In what was then modern verse he wrote an *ars pictoria*: *Den grondt der edel vry schilderconst* (Basics of the noble and free art of painting) (1604), that, in the best literary tradition, had not only a surface meaning but was also, in an allegorical manner, pregnant with meaning on various other levels, offering, among other things, teachings in the field of ethics and astronomy (Van Mander 1973). Of crucial importance for poets and painters alike was his allegorical explanation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, *Wtlegghingh op den Metamorphosis* (first impression in the *Schilderboeck*, and many times reprinted separately). After a tour of Europe he had settled down in Haarlem in 1582 as a southern immigrant. And there he founded a kind of academy where the pictorial arts were practised on the basis of high ethical and intellectual standards. This academy gave Haarlem a definite edge over other cities, especially Amsterdam. Van Mander died in 1606 and although he had already been living in Amsterdam for several years, he does not seem to have formed a circle there. His *Schilderboeck*, apart from the *Grondt der edel vry schilderconst* and the *Wtlegghingh* of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, also contained an adapta-



35. Frontispiece Carel van Mander, *Schilder-boeck*. Haarlem 1604.

tion of the biographies of painters by Giorgio Vasari and his own supplement: the lives of German and Dutch painters. With this book Van Mander also introduced the literary genre of the artist biography in the Netherlands. The work was to have a long-lasting influence. Early in the eighteenth century, sizable volumes of painters' biographies were written by Arnold Houbraken and Jacob Campo Weijerman, both of them artists who wrote as well as painted and were clearly inspired by Van Mander.

As a prominent Mennonite artist and intellectual, Van Mander must have been an alluring example to the young Vondel, and his influence is easily and amply demonstrable. Vondel actually became the writer whose work was the most emphatic embodiment of "ut pictura poesis" in Amsterdam, the cultural center of the Netherlands. In 1654 his translation of Horace's odes was published, preceded by a dedication, dated October 27, 1653: 'Aen de kunstgenooten van Sint Lucas t'Amsterdam, schilders, beelthouwers, tekenaers, en hunne begunstigers' (To the fellow artists of Saint Luke in Amsterdam, painters, sculptors, draughtsmen and their patrons). In this dedication Vondel expresses his view on the close connection between literature and the other arts. Vondel sees a strong relationship: "Although each form of art has its own rules, yet some arts are closely linked by a singular bond of fellowship, being like kinsfolk. Such are poetry, painting, sculpture and other arts, that, being similarly based on measure and number, cannot do without mathematics. [...] On everyone's lips is now Plutarch's adage that a painting is voiceless poetry and poetry a speaking painting, because the painter portrays his thoughts by means of stroke and color and the poet pictures his reflections in words. [...] In his *Ars poetica*, Horace often unites poetry with painting." (Hoewel elcke Kunst haer eige bepalinge heeft, nochtans worden zommighe Kunsten door eenerhanden bant van onderlinge gemeenschap verknocht, en gelijck vermaeghschapt; hoedanige zijn Poëzy, Schilderkunst, Beelthouwery, en andere Kunsten, die, te gelijck op maet en getal gegront, de Wiskunst niet ontbeeren mogen [...]) Van Plutarchus heeft elck nu in den mont dat schildery stomme Poëzy, de Poëzy spreekende schildery is: want de Schilder beelt zijne gedachten met streken en verwen, de Dichter zijne bespiegelingen met woorden uit [...] Horatius, in deze zijne Dichtkunste, paert menighmael de Poëzy en Schilderkunst te zamen.) (Vondel VII 1934, 261).

In the fragments cited, Vondel summarizes what through the ages had been laid down regarding the relation between the visual arts and literature. Both arts are founded on one and the same mathematical base, the reference being *Sap.* 11, 21 "Omnia in mensura, et numero, et pondere disposuisti". Besides this biblical foundation, classical authorities are also cited. In his much-read treatise *Quomodo adolescens poetas audire debeat* Plutarch had popularized Simonides' statement on painting as voiceless poetry and poetry as speaking painting. And in

addition to that, reference is, of course, always made to Horace's *Ars Poetica*, which includes famous passages that were adduced as proof for the close relations between both arts.

It was not accidental that Vondel presented his thoughts on the subject in October of 1653. Just a week before, he, the Amsterdam Apollo, had been honored by a group of visual artists, servants of Apelles. The homage probably has to be placed within the framework of the Amsterdam painters' wish to stress their identity, both socially and culturally. The next year, again in October, they proceeded to found a 'Broederschap der schilderkunst' (Fraternity of painters), with which some poets were also affiliated, however. Thus the painters seceded from the ancient guild of St. Luke, which, because it included not only painters but also decorators, had an aura of craftsmanship rather than artistry. It may furthermore be supposed that the founding of the Fraternity — apart from the emancipationist aspirations of the painters — had to do with the completion of the new Amsterdam Townhall, for which many painters had received commissions. The poets made contributions in their own manner to this ambitious municipal project. Not only did Vondel himself write a lengthy poem on the *Inwydinge van 't Stadthuis* (Inauguration of the Townhall) but he was also responsible for texts explaining the paintings that adorned the various rooms. His rival Jan Vos did no less: he also composed an *Inwyding van het Stadthuis* and wrote explanatory epigrams for the paintings to be admired in the building.

By paying homage to Vondel in particular, the painters had made an obvious choice. His statements on the relation between the arts had not been pious words called forth by the occasion. Many times before he had given proof of his great interest in the sister art. His collection *Verscheide gedichten* (Miscellaneous poems) of 1644 is certain to have been regarded with interest in painting circles: the book contains quite a number of poems that have a painting as a subject and it did, indeed, initiate a novel trend. Shortly after, many poets were to occupy themselves extensively with poems about pictures. In his *Aenleidinge ter Nederduitsche dichtkunste* (1650) (Introduction to Dutch poetry), a brief poetics in the vein of Horace, Vondel had already connected the two arts. Translating famous poets, he wrote, is useful for the apprentice poet, just as copying is instructive for the apprentice painter. And a poet has to start from small beginnings, just as the apprentice painter first has to paint limbs, then a whole body and only then may finally put down a composition on the panel, "as on a stage" (als op een tooneel) (Vondel V, 1931, 488).

This theatrical comparison is interesting. Vondel made this connection between the stage and painting a number of times. He mentions that one of the factors that contributed to the creation of his tragedy *Joseph in Dothan* (1640) had been the impression made on him by a painting on the same subject by Jan Pynas.



36. Jan Pynas, *Joseph's blood-stained clothing, shown to Jakob*.

In the preface to the tragedy, he explicitly declares that he “tried to imitate in words the colors, design and passions of the painter” (*gelijck wy [...] met woorden des schilders verwen, teickeningen, en hartstoghten, pooghden na te volgen*) in the passage where Jacob’s reaction to Joseph’s bloodied tunic is narrated (Vondel IV 1930, 74). In the preface to his *Gebroeders* (The brothers), a play in which passions run high, the poet imagines how Peter Paul Rubens would have painted the crucial moment. And elsewhere in this preface, the poet appeals to the art of painting to defend his approach to the subject (Vondel III 1929, 801-802). In his *Tooneelschildt* (A shield for the stage) of 1661, he emphatically applies the qualification “speaking painting” (*spreekende schilderye*) to dramatic poetry (Vondel IX 1936, 384).

Nor was he the only one with this opinion. On the side of the painters we may note a special interest for the theater. Several drawings by Rembrandt appear to refer to Vondel’s *Gysbreght*. He made an engraving for the tragedy *Medea* (1648), written by his patron Jan Six, the later burgomaster of Amsterdam, and several of



37. Gerrit van Honthorst, *Granida and Daifilo*, 1625.

his paintings have been connected to plays that were popular on the Amsterdam stage at that time. A bold hypothesis even relates the *Nightwatch* to Vondel's *Gysbreght van Aemstel*. Scenes from Bredero's tragical comedies and from Hooft's pastoral play *Granida* were portrayed more than once on paintings, from the twenties onward, in the period that pastoral scenes, following the Utrecht caravaggist school, became popular among painters. The eighteenth century painter Cornelis Troost took great pleasure in painting scenes from the seventeenth century farces.

To return to literature, the relation between stage and painting was dealt with in an almost programmatic manner by the third author to be mentioned here, Jan Vos. Being a theater man in heart and soul, Vos thought in an essentially pictorial way, as is manifest from the motto he had chosen as the keynote for his work: seeing is superior to saying. He was manager of the Schouwburg, designed performances and wrote two exciting revenge tragedies that offered the public an excep-

tionally rich spectacle. Like Vondel he wrote many explanatory texts to paintings. His interest in painting was also reflected by a more or less theoretical work, a poem published in the same year that the Fraternity was founded: *Strijdt tusschen de doodt en natuur of Zeege der schilderkunst* (Battle between death and nature or Victory of painting). When Death threatens to gain the victory, endangered Nature repairs to “the court of noble Painting”. Painting is found, not accidentally, in a Rembrandtesque studio, complete with a skull, a lion’s skin, and old books:

What all had cast away, here receives rank again

Wat elk verwurpen heeft krijgt hier weêr stand

(Vos 1662, 138)

Painting is in the company of her sister Poetry who assists and inspires her. Painting presents herself to Nature and demonstrates that she is able to vanquish Death by her power to bestow immortality. Nature then has a vision, in which the city of Amsterdam is seen to prosper and swarm with painters and poets. Even the foundation of the Fraternity is prophesied:

Apollo will unite here with Apelles

Apollo zal hier met Apelles paaren.

(Vos 1662, 140)

Next, a long list of painters is mentioned. In this, Vos is not partial. He finds room for masters like Emmanuel de Witte, painter of church interiors, or Willem Kalff, the refined still-life painter. But Rembrandt heads the list, as could be expected since Vos is known to have been one of his firm supporters. The latter fact touches on the existence of various artistic schools that can be distinguished both in poetry and in painting at the time.

Pels vs. Vos

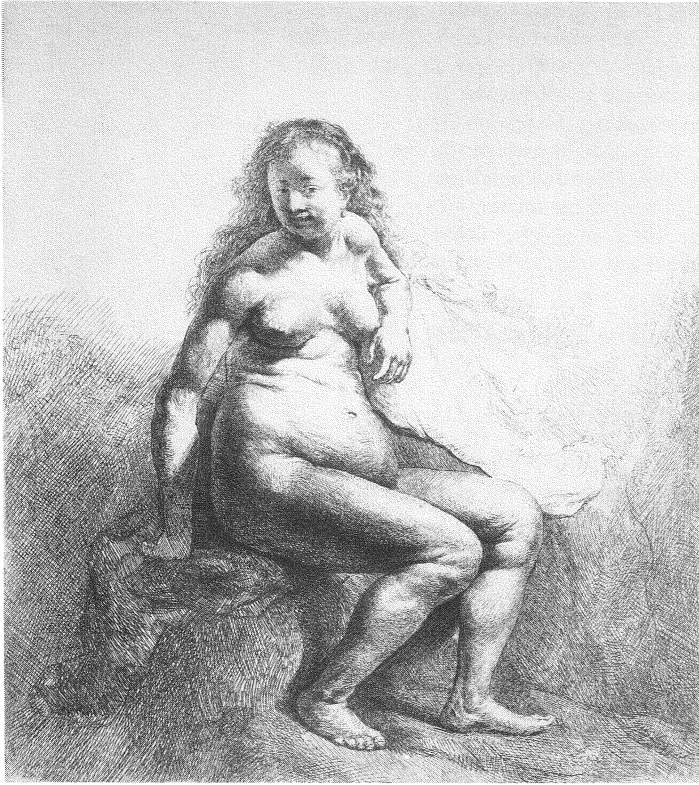
Some years later, the situation is clearly expounded by Andries Pels, in 1669 co-founder of the society *Nil volentibus arduum* that had undertaken to improve the level of stage-play in the Amsterdam theater. One point on which the argument turned, was a matter of content. Pels, in whose eyes the stage should serve especially as an instrument of education for upper-class youth, was in favor of plays that promoted virtue and kept their distance from any current political events. The stage should serve the existing order and avoid conflicts. For that reason, as we have seen earlier, he even rejected Vondel’s biblical dramas. Biblical matter



38. A performance of Jan Vos, *Aran and Titus* in rural surroundings. Engraving in Lukas Rotgans, *Boerekermis*. Amsterdam 1735.

should be dealt with only from the pulpit by ordained preachers. In the theater, religion just creates problems.

He wanted orderly art, also with regard to form. He was a convinced classicist and emphatically propagated French theatrical art, especially as represented both in theory and practice by Corneille, as a model for the Dutch situation. The main requirement is that art follow the classical laws and rules rather than blindly put its trust in talent alone. His *bête noire* in the theater world was Jan Vos, who had recently propounded the view that only Nature should be the teacher of Art. The theatrical laws of Aristotle and Horace Vos definitely did not consider infallible. True poetry, in his opinion, does not derive from the study of theory but from innate talent. Vos practiced what he preached. His plays *Aran en Titus* (1641; the subject matter akin to that of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*) and *Medea* (1667) with their lack of moderation and order, deliberately create a sense of chaos, because life itself, as he saw it, is full of disorder, too.



39. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Naked woman seated on a mound*.

In order to demonstrate how such Vossianic art must fail as a result of its disregard of laws and rules, Pels presents the example of Rembrandt. Refusing to follow the lessons of his predecessors, he had chosen to deviate and to be “the first heretic in painting”. He did not look, as he should have done in Pels’ eyes, for ideal beauty, but blindly followed life. In a notorious passage, in which his anger made him eloquent, Pels lashed out against Rembrandt, who:

Whenever it occurred that he would paint a nude
 No Aphrodite chose that for him sat or stood:
 A washerwoman or peat-stamper from a hovel!
 An error, which he calls following Nature’s model.
 All else: vain ornament. Weak breasts in need of bracing
 Gnarled hands, e’en stomach weals caused by tight bodice lacing
 And legs with pressure marks from garters, just released,
 It must be followed all, or nature is not pleased.
 That is: *his* nature isn’t: rules are no more acknowledged
 And for all human limbs, proportion is abolished.

Als hy een' naakte vrouw, gelyk 't somtyds gebeurde,
 Zou schild'ren, tot model geen Grieksche Venus keurde;
 Maar eer een' waschter, of turftreedster uit een' schuur,
 Zyn' dwaaling noemende navolging van Natuur,
 Al 't ander ydele verziëring. Slappe borsten,
 Verwongen' handen, ja de neepen van de borsten
 Des ryglyfs in de buik, des kousebands om 't been,
 't Moest al gevolgd zyn, of natuur was niet te vreên;
 Ten minsten zyne, die geen regels, noch geen reden
 Van evenmaätigheid gedoogde in 's menschen leden.

(Pels 1978, 78)

In his description of a studio à la Rembrandt, Vos had remarked —full of admiration — :

What all had cast away, here receives rank again.

In reply, Pels uses quite a number of lines to describe disdainfully the folly of Rembrandt who combed the markets for old rags with which to clothe his models.

The common artistic theory of the two arts makes it possible for painters and poets to learn from each other, but it also gives rise to mutual discussions. Where Vos, the poet who refuses to follow classical precepts, recognizes a kindred spirit in Rembrandt, Pels, on the other hand, uses the painter to warn his fellow poets by showing them the unhappy example of this *ingenium* that without art became deranged. In an artistic conflict like this one, the dividing lines run across both disciplines: in both one can be a classicist or feel oneself free from classical precepts.

Another controversy touches on the relative value of the two arts and sometimes turns painters and poets into opponents. In his *Zeege der Schilderkunst* (Victory of Painting) Jan Vos generously attributes the power over death to painters and he, the poet, sees poetry as a kind of younger sister only in terms of her advisory capacity. In an occasional poem in honor of a society of painters this may be an acceptable position to take, but in a different context the opposite point of view might be defended with equal passion. In the preface to the *Hollantsche Parnas* (1660) the maxim that poetry is painting endowed with speech leads to the postulation that poetry is superior, an opinion that, understandably, is voiced most often by poets. Such oppositions must not be taken all too seriously, however. Generally appreciation preponderates and although, when the opportunity arises, sly digs may be made at colleagues, this does not detract from the mutual admiration and cooperation.

Epigrams to paintings

Appreciation as well as competition may also be recognized in the wide-spread practice of making epigrams to paintings. This literary genre, already known from Antiquity, was also actively pursued by many poets in the Golden Age. It was made popular by Vondel, in whose collection *Verscheide gedichten* (Miscellaneous poems) (1644) a whole series of such epigrams was included. Even more abundantly, the genre is represented in the works of, again, Jan Vos. This kind of poem is interesting for more than one reason. It shows something of the relations between poets, painters and patrons and offers insight into the reasons why poets praised, or perhaps criticized paintings.

Rather common are epigrams on portraits. This type was especially suited to express the *paragone* between painters and poets, all the more so if the person portrayed was a man of letters. A much-loved cliché was first to admire the painter for his true rendering of reality, only to reproach him subsequently for not capturing the essence of the person portrayed, whose importance lay in his spoken or written words. This is the context in which we should interpret the only poem in which Vondel mentions Rembrandt by name, an epigram on the portrait of the preacher Cornelis Anslo.

Show, Rembrandt, Anslo's voice by art:
This outward form 's his lesser part.
Our ears teach us what's not appearing.
Anslo's not seen, unless by hearing.

Ay, Rembrant, maal Cornelis stem.
Het zichtbre deel is 't minst van hem:
't Onzichtbre kent men slechts door d'ooren.
Wie Anslo zien wil, moet hem hooren.

(Vondel IV 1930, 209)

In his turn, Brandt, Vondel's biographer, wrote:

The grey-haired Vondel, who by epos, tragedy,
By song and epigram vied with antiquity
For laurel wreaths, to whom each who writes Dutch refers
May be seen on this print, but lives on in his verse.

De gryze Vondel, die door treurstyl, heldentoon
Door lier- en hekeldicht met d'outheit om de kroon
Des lauwers streeft, voor wien wat Neerduits schryft moet zwichten,
Vertoont zich in dees print, maar leeft in zyn gedichten.

(Brand 1725, 90)

Very subtly Jan Six van Chandelier also takes part in this competition regarding the immortalizing powers of painting and literature. Typically, he chooses his starting point in an event that occurred in his own family: the fact that David van Baudrighem had painted a portrait of Six' father, who had since died. This painting will now keep the father alive, as it were. Or will it? What is going to happen when the painting, being transitory like all earthly goods, is finally defeated by time? Then the poet comes into action:

But virtue, on a paper's whiteness
Described with all the fervent brightness
Of poetry, dies nevermore
Reprinted with honor galore.
Thus, without any laying-on
The father shall by what the son,
That's I, have written, see no end.
For Persius and Marsus stand.

Maar deughtsaamheit op wit papier
Beschreeven, met en geestigh vier
Van dichtery, sterft nimmermeer,
Herdruckt, en onverkleint, van eer.
Aldus zal, sonder roemery,
De vaader, door de Poësy,
Van my, syn soone, nooit vergaan.
Want Persius, en Marsus staan.

(Six van Chandelier 1991, 542)

The clichés abound: naturally it is pre-eminently the poet's task to immortalize an invisible entity like virtue; and naturally poetry, not being dependent on matter, easily gets the best of the transient pictorial art. Brazenly Six proclaims that he, the verse-writing son, will surpass the work of the portrait-painter. Nothing whatsoever in the poem gives any warning of the trap in the last line: the first of the two casually mentioned poets actually was a satirist (Persius) and the other a completely unknown author (Marsus) of whose work nothing has come down to us. As a result the point of the epigram becomes suddenly completely different: none of the arts is a match for death and the *paragone* is declared meaningless.

As I have indicated, Vondel's *Poëzy* or *Verscheide gedichten* (1644) was in large part responsible for the flourishing of this epigrammatic genre. However, there are more reasons to study the volume with a view to the relations between the sister arts. A painter, Joachim Sandrart, played an important part in the realization of the book by designing the frontispiece. His interest is understandable. Some of the poems included are strongly connected to him and his work. Vondel had made twelve epigrams for the series of the twelve months that Sandrart had painted in 1642-43 by order of the Bavarian Elector Maximilian. They had first



40. Frontispiece of Joost van den Vondel, *Poëzy*. Amsterdam 1644.
Designed by Joachim Sandrart.

been printed on a broadsheet, but were later included in Vondel's poetry. It is typical for the internationally rather limited scope of Dutch verse that when Sandrart wanted to publish a book of engravings based on his paintings in 1645, he asked the Neo-Latin poet Barlaeus to provide the epigrams for the international public he envisioned. In his 1644 volume Vondel also included the poems that he had written to accompany the paintings in Sandrart's art collection. It is quite probable that these epigrams were meant to have a favorable effect on the sale of the pieces when Sandrart moved to Germany in 1645. A most practical slant to the cooperation of the two arts, indeed!

In the case of epigrams to paintings, the part played by poets is in principle a subservient one. They give an explanation of the picture, evoke in language its affective qualities, laud the painter for his ability, and compliment the owner on his beautiful possession. In their turn, painters "serve" poets, of course, by portraying them. To mention but a few, Sandrart and Philips Koninck portrayed Vondel, Rembrandt painted a portrait of Jeremias de Decker and Hooft was immortalized on canvas by the court painter Van Mierevelt. Huygens, too, was portrayed more than once, for instance on a beautiful painting by Thomas de Keyser, now in the National Gallery in London. An art collector from the eighteenth century fitted out a whole cabinet with miniature paintings of Dutch writers containing originally some 80 portraits, made after drawings or engravings. In its turn, this *Panpoeticon Batavum* was described in verse by Lambert Bidloo, who in this way gave a first sketch of a history of Dutch literature in book form (1720).

Emblematics

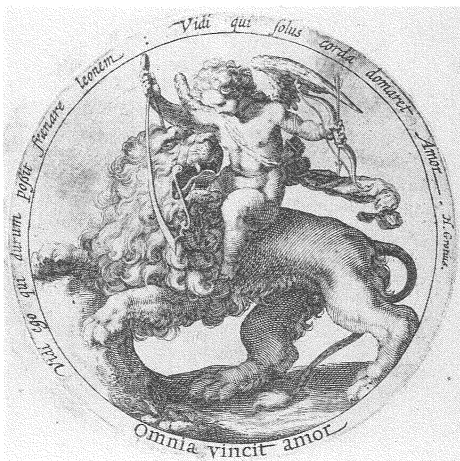
What is at times intensive cooperation between poets and visual artists is found in the typical bimedral genre of emblematics. Nowhere else in Europe did this genre flourish so richly as in the Netherlands, in a quantitative as well as in a qualitative sense. In the sixteenth century splendid emblem books were published, for instance, by Plantijn in Antwerp, among them many editions of the model work, Alciatus' *Emblematum liber*. Later, however, the genre proved most successful in the Northern Netherlands. A Dutch specialty became love emblematics, which was made into a fashion by the influential Daniel Heinsius, whose volume *Quaeris quid sit amor* dates from 1601. The mottoes are rendered in Latin, French or Italian, the epigrams on the prints, drawn by Jacques de Gheyn after older *picturae*, are in Dutch. Hooft followed this example with his *Emblemata amatoria* (1611) and Cats also made notable contributions.



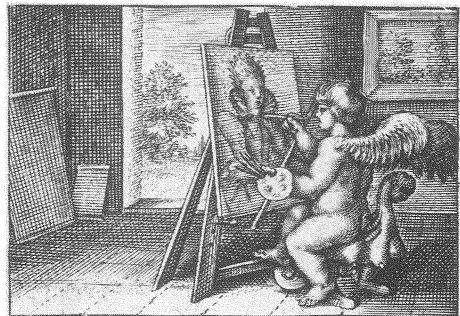
41. Thomas de Keyser, *Portrait of Constantijn Huygens and his (?) clerk*, 1627.

Even more characteristically Dutch are the emblem volumes in which the pictures refer directly to daily life. Here, Roemer Visscher led the way. In 1614 he published his *Sinnepoppen*. He reports to have had at his disposal drawings — by Claes Jansz. Visscher — which even though derived from older emblem volumes, took on a direct and realistic character thanks to a kind of close-up technique. The great man in this field, however, is, again, Jacob Cats, the most widely-read poet in Holland. In his case there was actually a close cooperation between poet and illustrator, with the poet playing the leading role here. Cats devised the emblems and wrote the epigrams, the Zeeland artist Adriaen van de Venne designed the delightful pictures, often inspired by Dutch daily life. In this way and also because of the wide-ranging contents of the book, his *Sinne- en minnebeelden* (first ed. 1618) became in more than one way a monument to life and thought in the Netherlands. Just as typically Dutch, both in text and pictures, are the *Emblemata* by Johan de Brune (1624), for which again Adriaen van de Venne designed the pictures.

The co-operation in the emblematic field between the sister arts reached a peak in the work of the poet-engraver Jan Luyken (1649-1712), who devised and engraved his own emblems, and wrote the corresponding poems as well. The lessons that he intends to convey are of a mystical religiosity that reveals a strong influence by Jacob Böhme. He usually takes his lessons from daily life, however, and his volumes bear titles like *Spiegel van het menselijk bedrijf vertonende honderd verscheiden ambachten* (Mirror of human activity, showing one hundred different trades) or *Het leerzaam huisraad* (The instructive household goods).



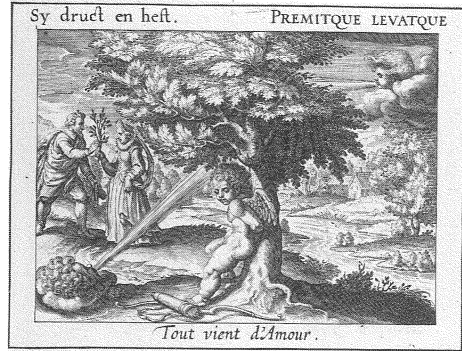
42. Daniel Heinsius, 'Omnia vincit amor.'



43. Daniel Heinsius, 'Imaginem eius mecum gesto.'



44. Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft, 'Hoe hoogher hoe heeter' (The higher the hotter).



45. Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft, 'Sy druct en heft' (She pushes down and raises).



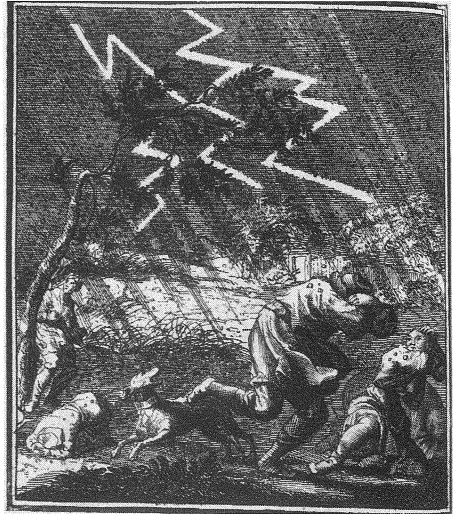
46. Jacob Cats, 'Grijpjet wel, soo ist maer spel' (If you handle it right, it's just a game).



47. Jacob Cats, "Tis maer een niet, die't wel besiet' (It is of no importance when you consider it well).



48. Jan Luiken, 'Heeden Groot, Morgen Dood' (Proud Today, Dead tomorrow).



49. Jan Luiken, 't Kan veranderen' (Things may change).

In Holland, therefore, poets and visual artists are seen to encounter each other strikingly often, not only on many social occasions but also for purposes of mutual cooperation and in discussions on the respective values of their arts. The artists held comparable positions in society, they often served the same patrons and their works were sold or read in the same circles. In the discussions the poets understandably led the way, their art being based on thinking and writing. Still, in the *paragone* their point of view is actually rather modest: even though they may extol the immaterial art of the word above the matter-bound work of their colleagues, one is generally struck more by the cordial cooperation shown than by a sharp rivalry. This may be explained by the apparent lack of competition between the two kinds of artists in the financial arena. Or rather, the more pretentious poets forbore to compete here. The painters, as professional artists, let themselves be paid for their commissions; the poets, sporting their status of men of letters, sought honor and at the most a token of appreciation that might be considered honorable. One might regard this as an example of the dialectics of progress. The men of the word rated themselves higher from a social point of view than the

workers with the brush. But the latter succeeded better and earlier in acquiring a regular patronage and even in working on the free market. The disturbing tension between *otium* and *negotium* that at times the poets experienced, never arose for the painters, and as a result their artistic emancipation appears to have been more successful.



50. Gerrit Adriaenszoon Berckheyde, *The town hall on the Dam, Amsterdam*, 1693.

VII

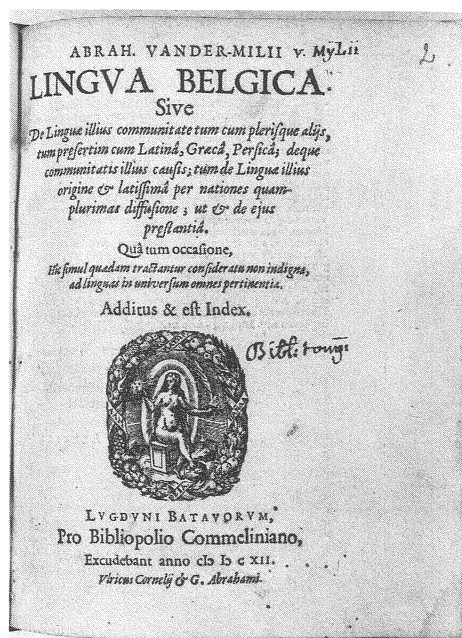
Holland as a literary and cultural staple market



In the seventeenth century the Dutch Republic was the trading center of Western Europe and a transit port for goods from all over the world. Dutch merchants traded in the East and the West Indies, in the countries around the Mediterranean and the Baltic. If on paintings of the Amsterdam Bourse and the central Amsterdam square, the Dam, one often sees foreigners in exotic attire in a more or less prominent position, it is for the good reason that the Dutch people were proud of their international orientation. The question presents itself, therefore, whether the Republic played a similar international role in the cultural field, which in the present context means in literature.

Knowledge of foreign languages

Circumstances were favorable in several respects. In prospering, densely populated and urbanized Holland printing businesses and bookstores had an important place. The degree of literacy was relatively high and literary products from domestic as well as of foreign sources found a rather large group of buyers. Dutchmen had a considerable command of foreign languages. For this we have a curious contemporary statement by one Abraham van der Mijle, who was of the opinion that



51. Frontispiece of Abraham van der Mijle, *Lingua Belgica* ... Leiden 1612.

Dutch was the oldest language in the world and that for that reason Dutchmen found it easy to learn other languages. In his *Lingua Belgica* (1612) he writes: “No other people can express themselves so correctly as the Dutch: not only as to words and idiom, but also — what is more difficult — as to the native pronunciation of every language, the sounds, the various intonations and the emotional value of the words” (Scherpbier 1933, 8). Such a Dutchman — still according to Van der Mijle — gladly learns German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and “Indian” etc.

The suggestion that Dutchmen really were able to cope in so many languages, appears to be supported by the existence of a textbook like *Colloquia et dictionariolum octo linguarum, Latinae, Gallicae, Belgicae, Teutonicae, Hispanicae, Italiacae, Anglicae et Portiugallicae liber omnibus linguarum studiosis domi ac foris apprimè necessarius*, published in 1605, and reprinted several times. For travelers and also for any merchant who had to entertain foreigners in his own hometown, a textbook like this would come in handy. But the existence of such a simple conversation manual hardly proves that people were able to read and speak all those languages, just as possessing booklets like *Traveller's Spanish* etc. nowadays does not establish the owner's proficiency in the languages concerned.

Sufficient data exist, however, to make it plausible that the well-educated Dutchman had a fair knowledge of several languages. Just as many present-day Dutch are able to express themselves passably well in English, in that age the same held for French. French was the language of international diplomacy and to a slightly lesser degree also that of international commerce; and certainly in the Netherlands, it was the language that afforded a measure of social prestige. Curiously enough, those with the most elaborate education had not learned that language in school. The upper middle class sent their sons to the Latin school, the only one that could prepare for university. Almost the only subject taught at these schools was Latin. At most the pupils received an additional smattering of Greek, some religious education and calligraphy. The French school catered for both boys and girls who were not destined for the university. As the name indicates, French was taught there, as well as some other subjects, occasionally including other languages.

But in addition to schools, private education was also of great importance, especially with regard to languages. The poet Constantijn Huygens, for instance, is known to have received home tuition. He relates in his autobiography that at home speaking Dutch was prohibited when he was about nine years old, and that from that time onwards the children spoke only French to each other and to their parents. Their tutor also taught Latin, and later Greek, too. Huygens' knowledge of languages — to complete his story here — also extended to Italian, which he learned during his studies at Leyden University, where he also acquired some English; both languages were taught by private tutors. To improve his English he ordered a dictionary from a London bookseller, and we know that he possessed the *Dictionarie Italian and English by Florio, Lond. 1611* in this way listed in the auction catalogue of his library. Of course, Huygens' education was not an average one, but his story shows that a command of French was deemed indispensable for anybody who wanted to move in higher circles and was destined for a career in the civil service or international diplomacy.

In general school books may give certain indications regarding more or less common knowledge. From the 1610 auction catalogue of the bookseller Cornelis Claesz the section 'School-goedt in Frans ende Duyts' (Schoolbooks in French and Dutch) has recently been analyzed. The main part was formed by booklets that were used in French classes: dictionaries, bilingual gospels, collections of stories. These were booklets intended for the French schools. The lack of textbooks in other languages indicates that they received little or no attention. The section did contain, however, the above-mentioned manual in eight languages next to a similar seven-language booklet. These data confirm that French was the most important foreign language for Dutch people. Many will have acquired fluency in it

when after the early lessons at school or at home they went on trading journeys and study tours in France. Cats, for instance, took a degree in Orleans, and Hooft spent some months in La Rochelle to learn business.

As regards German, people probably were able to cope in that language without real study. In booksellers' catalogues there is often a fair section of books in High German, which indicates that a reading knowledge of it was fairly common. In farces on stage, German gibberish, even in lengthy clauses, was certain to have much success and it is to be assumed, therefore, that the people at least understood a fair deal of what was said, even though some prejudice existed against the immigration of poor German craftsmen.

We saw that Huygens also acquired competence in Italian. That, too, was not exceptional in the Netherlands. This language still had some importance for international business dealings, especially in the Mediterranean countries. In the sixteenth century a strong Italian colony had been present in the Southern Netherlands, particularly in trading centers like Antwerp. Jan van der Noot, the patrician poet, was acquainted with many Italian merchants and had an active command of the language. Later on, the Northern Netherlands also cultivated trade relations with the Italians. In addition, the part played by music and literature should not be underrated. The bookseller's catalogues have rather large sections devoted to Italian books. Italy was, of course, part of the Grand Tour and this also accounts for the fact that knowledge of Italian was not uncommon.

The knowledge of Spanish was much less widespread. There evidently was little need and maybe even less inclination to learn the language of the enemy, although some Spanish books were included in the catalogues.

By way of conclusion to this section, a rough estimate may be offered from the percentages of books in foreign languages included in the catalogues. Those of Cornelis Claesz show a distribution of 60% Latin, 13% French, 12% German, 2.5% Italian, and about 1% Spanish books. In the section non-Latin books in Blaeu's 1659 catalogue, French books have 22 pages, German 29-30, Italian 10-11, Spanish 4 pages.

The latter catalogue is interesting for still another reason: an appendix provides a list of books in foreign languages that had been printed in the Republic. This draws attention once more to the importance of the Netherlands as producer of books for the whole of Europe — a consequence of the prevailing political and religious tolerance in the Republic.

Conspicuously absent is, of course, English. This may be somewhat surprising, as there were many starting-points for a lively cultural and literary exchange with England. In the eighties of the sixteenth century Leicester, sent as an adviser to the States-General as a token of support by Queen Elisabeth, had brought an important group of Englishmen to Holland in his retinue. Particularly in Leyden,

the contacts were excellent and we see Philip Sidney staying in the house of town secretary Jan van Hout who even tried to acquire some English for the occasion. Later, too, we regularly find a contingent of English students in Leyden. Another point of contact was formed by the groups of English actors who stopped in the Netherlands on their way to Germany and had great success in the Republic. The success was due, however, to their acting abilities and not to the linguistic content of the plays: the audience did not understand the texts.

Maybe it was the increasing rivalry between the two countries that stood in the way of a linguistic rapprochement, the more so because it also led to a decrease in direct commercial relations. But another point is also worth mentioning. Above, the view was taken that the Dutch had to be able to express themselves in foreign languages in order to play their role in international trade and to fill adequately their leading position in European politics. Conversely it was also true, however, that many non-Dutch people had to be able to get by in Dutch. That trend was particularly evident in Germany and the Baltic states. Dutch was a kind of coastal *lingua franca*. Church ties also resulted in Dutch being the language in which sermons were preached and psalms were sung, not only in border districts but deep into northern Germany as well. A similar situation obtained, although much less so, in the relation between the Republic and England. At any rate, the Dutch had no intention to come humbly, hat in hand, and address the competitors in their own language. In conversation one used the language of diplomacy, French. And quite a number of Englishmen from maritime circles actually knew Dutch. A third point that may have some importance is that often the Dutch appeared to have a certain contempt for the English language. With its mixture of Germanic and Romance elements, it was considered to be a broken mongrel tongue commanding little respect. For the Dutch, true civilization came from the South. However this may be, the actual facts are clear: generally speaking, even well-educated Dutchmen did not know any English and therefore did not read it, either.

The general indications regarding the knowledge of foreign languages as pointed out above may now be applied especially to literature, starting with the authors. For the international orientation of Dutch literature it is important to know whether they were able to read foreign poetry and to digest and imitate what they had learned there.

It will be impossible, of course, to give a systematic and complete picture of the linguistic knowledge of all Dutch authors, but a small number of instances may suffice. Limiting ourselves to the more important authors, Van der Noot, Hooft, Bredero, Vondel, Cats and Huygens, we may establish from their works that they had a working knowledge of the following languages; those of which only a limited, passive knowledge may be assumed appear between parentheses.

Van der Noot:	French, Italian, Spanish, Latin
Hooft:	French, Italian, Latin
Bredero:	French
Vondel:	French, (Italian), Latin
Cats:	French, Italian, English, (Spanish), (German), Latin
Huygens:	French, Italian, English, (Spanish), Latin.

Bredero and Vondel are the least highly placed persons on the list from a social point of view and they had only a limited formal education. Bredero confesses that some “school book French is rattling around in his brain” (die maer een weynich kintsschoolfrans in ’t hoofd rammelde, Bredero 1984, 114), and although he probably is too modest here, it indicates that he acquired his French at school and therefore did not attend the Latin school. Of Vondel’s education we know next to nothing. At an early age he knew French and he may be presumed to have learned it at school. His Latin he learned later by self-tuition and the level he attained may be derived from the fact that he deemed it worth the trouble to publish his, admittedly not impeccable, translations of Horace, Vergil and Ovid. That he tried to make himself familiar with Italian is shown by a surviving manuscript with part of a laborious translation of Tasso’s *Gerusalemme liberata*. Cats’ and Huygens’ knowledge of English is a rare feature: both men actually spent a period in England. Bredero, though interested in the English theatre, confesses not to be able to speak English (Bredero 1975b, 123).

Importation of literature

A list like this leads us to the correct assumption that Dutch literature had an international slant. People were well informed, indeed. The booksellers’ catalogues that have come down to us from that period are most instructive in this regard as well. Analysis of these sources has recently been carried out in a systematic way with very interesting results. In Amsterdam foreign books were in plentiful supply, not only scholarly books in Latin and in various modern languages, but also belles lettres. It has been established that, for instance, the bookseller Cornelis Claesz would have been able to supply Bredero from stock with the sources for his literary work: the French and Dutch translations of *Lazarillo de Tormes*, the *Histoires tragiques*, and, more astonishingly, an Italian version of Terentius’ *Eunuchus*, viz. Dolce’s *La mora*. The same catalogue lists a collection of four comedies by Aretino and the edition of *l’Hypocrito* offered for sale was the very same used by Hooft for his adaptation.

Throughout the century it was French literature that most influenced its Dutch counterpart. In fact, the whole new Renaissance literature was absorbed mainly by way of France: Petrarchan sonnets, for instance, were read here in their French versions. The Pléiade poets and related authors like Philippe Desportes were read avidly and left many traces, especially in love lyrics. Also of great importance was the work of the Calvinist literary virtuoso Du Bartas whose *La semaine* was translated into Dutch several times. Vestiges of his style are to be found in the work of many Dutch authors: Van Mander, Heinsius and last but not least Vondel, who as a young poet must have devoured Du Bartas' biblical epics. Dutch poets kept fairly well abreast of modern literature also. Huygens is acquainted with the work of his contemporaries Théophile de Viau and Saint-Amant, and Scarron's burlesque verse was imitated quickly here by Focquenbroch.

At first, French influence on the Dutch stage was not particularly strong, but in the second half of the seventeenth century French plays served as a model for Dutch playwrights. The cultural society *Nil volentibus arduum* advocated a reform of the stage and propagated both in theory and in practice the tenets of French classicism, particularly as voiced by Corneille's *Trois discours sur le poème dramatique* (1660). Corneille, Racine and Molière, but also many lesser gods, were performed in Dutch translations.

Italian literature penetrated here with much more delay and, as noted above, often by way of France. A few sonnets by Petrarch were translated at a rather late stage. Jan van der Noot adapted some of Petrarch's love sonnets and also some of his invectives against Rome in his respective collections *Het bosken* (The copse) and *Het theatre* of around 1570. Translators of Petrarch in the Northern Netherlands were, among others, Jan van Hout, from Leyden, and Roemer Visscher, and — later — Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft, both from Amsterdam. The latter poet was a key figure in the relation between Italian and Dutch literature. During his Grand Tour he had come to know Italy extensively and his work contains many vestiges of Italian literature, showing that he had read not only Petrarch but also Ariosto, Tasso and Guarini as well as Machiavelli and Castiglione. His own pastoral play *Granida* (1605) shows clear marks of his thorough reading of Guarini's *Il pastor fido* and is a landmark in the reception of Italian pastoral literature. Pastoral songs were popular, although the bucolic atmosphere did not reach much further than the use of some pastoral names and the evocation of a more or less Italianate landscape. It may be presumed that Italian music played a role here.

Under the influence of Sannazaro's *Arcadia* and Sidney's pastoral epic, Johan van Heemskerck wrote his *Batavische Arcadia* (1637), a novel with historical and other informative insertions, that enjoyed incredible popularity and was reprinted

many times until far into the eighteenth century. The didactic element increased with time so that later editions are found to contain lengthy discourses on the use of the rack, or the dissolute disposition of the Spanish, linked by only the flimsiest narrative thread. Widely read also were stories from Boccaccio's *Decamerone* (translated by Coornhert) and the *Novelle* by Bandello.

Spanish literature left less traces, except for the prose romances of *Amadis de Gaula* and *Palmerin de Oliva* that enjoyed a wide popularity all over Europe and were not only translated here but also adapted for the stage, particularly by Bredero. As far as plays are concerned, much of Lope de Vega was translated, either directly or by way of French versions, and the same holds for Calderon's comedies. As to lyrical verse, an interesting though isolated item is that the book-seller Blaeu in his 1659 catalogue offers the recent Brussels edition of the *Obras* by Luis de Gongora.

Turning to English literature now, one may observe that the limited knowledge of English in these parts, even among the intelligentsia, is reflected in the virtual absence of interest in English literary products, even theatrical ones. This also holds true for the performances by English theater groups mentioned earlier, even though these might be surmised to have had some impact. A contemporary Englishman describes the sorry state in which he found the art of acting in the Netherlands: "So as at the same tyme, when some cast Players of England came into these partes, the people not understanding what they said, only for their action followed them with wonderfull Concourse" (Bachrach 1970, 77-78).

This state of affairs is confirmed by a Dutch expert, Bredero:

Were it but the English ones, or other folk maybe
That one hears singing here and dancing merrily.
Ears ringing, popping eyes, they're spinning round like tops.
They know their roles by heart, here all's prompting and props.

Warent de Engelsche, of andere uytlandtsche
Die men hoort singhen, en so lustich sien dantse
Dat sy suysebollen, en draeyen als een tol:
Sy spreekent uyt haar geest, dees leerent uyt een rol.

(Bredero 1984, 234)

But this did not lead to anything. Although the English performers were admired for their acting, the English plays were not deemed worth any attention. The same Bredero asks: "What instructive reasoning did you ever hear from them, what edifying warnings towards others did you ever see from them?" (wat leerelijcke redenen hebt ghy oyt van haar gehoord? wat stichtelijcke waarschuwinge, tot voordeel van andere, hebt ghy oyt van haar ghesien?) (Bre-

dero 1975a, 123). It may be presumed that the English actors, performing for an audience that did not understand their language, would try to make up for that by emphasizing the sensational aspects of the action rather than offering deep thoughts or psychological insights which would not be understood anyway. And having been forced to make this choice, they allowed the Dutch to assume that England had little of interest or importance to offer. Accordingly, English influence on the Dutch theater is almost nonexistent. Not until 1654 was a play by Shakespeare, *The taming of the shrew*, considered sufficiently interesting to have it translated. Kyd and Tourneur had preceded him in a few instances.

Although little enough penetrated by way of translations, there is one field that constitutes an exception, that of religion. Religious prose, especially of the edifying variety, accounts for the greatest part of all translations. The outstanding best-seller was the Dutch version of Lewis Bayley's *The Practise of Piety* that scored a total of 32 editions between 1620 and 1688. The widest translated author was William Perkins. Indirectly this was of some importance to literature, after all, because the English pietists strongly affected the poets of the 'Nadere Reformatie'. Not surprisingly, John Bunyan also found his admirers in the Netherlands. Under the title *Eens christens reyse* (Journey of a Christian), *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) appeared in a Dutch translation already in 1682, the first translation into any foreign language. The printing of the fifth edition already in 1687 foreshadowed the success that was to last up till the beginning of this century.

English literature in a narrower sense hardly played a part at all in the Netherlands of the seventeenth century. The major effort to be mentioned is the translation by Huygens of nineteen lyrical poems by Donne. The only reaction to this has come down to us from Vondel: he had no use at all for this kind of poetry by the "obscure sun" Donne (Vondel III 1929, 415-416). Some English influence is also apparent in Huygens' *Zedeprinten* (Impresses of manners), written shortly after his stay in England and consisting of characters in the vein of Joseph Hall and Overbury. Lyly's *Euphues* was translated as late as 1668, almost a century after it had originally been published. Sidney's *Arcadia* could briefly profit from the flourishing of a Dutch Arcadian vogue and was already translated in 1639-40. Before, large parts of his *Apologie for poetry* (although without his name being mentioned) had been translated by Theodore Rodenburgh, one of the few authors with English connections and also the translator of Tourneur's *Revenger's tragedy*.

Even an author like Milton, who might be expected to have been regarded with some sympathy because of his religious affinity, was hardly known in the Netherlands. His *Defensio de populo anglicano* was translated into Dutch, but his plea for the republicans found no acclaim here: the Dutch revolt had not been basically anti-monarchist, and Milton's appeal to Dutch democratic feelings remained without response. The book brought him no fame, at best only notoriety. *Paradise*

lost was not translated before the eighteenth century, and by then the Dutch may have got to know it better under the title *Le paradis perdu*. It was the French spectral periodicals that finally fostered some interest in English literature at the start of the eighteenth century.

One cannot help but feel unhappy on reading the telling dictum of a late seventeenth century Dutch scholar and man of letters, who after having praised Spenser and Donne as “sharpwitted rhymers”, starts to boast: “But in Holland someone has gradually risen to the summit of inimitability, [...] Joost van den Vondel” (doch in Holland is allenskens ten top van onnavolgelijkheid gestegen [...] Joost van den Vondel), a judgment supported by another author, the Anglo-Dutch translator Willem Sewel, who considered Vondel’s versification superior to anything the English might have to offer. And what is one to say when reading that a whole list of authors, including “J. Donne, B. Johnson, J. Milton, W. Shakespear, Ph. Sidney” are qualified as “English poets who do not touch us Dutchmen very much” (Schoneveld 1983, 119-120; 160). With hindsight, this splendid isolation from British literature can only be deplored.

Finally, German literature hardly penetrated here at all: the movement was in the other direction, Germany being far behind in gaining access to the new Renaissance literature. The main exception is the religious work of the mystic Jacob Böhme, who was translated into Dutch and had a great influence on the work of the late seventeenth century poet Jan Luyken.

The picture given here would be incomplete and misleading if one did not mention the reception and adaptation of classical and Neo-Latin literature. The Dutch theater was formed by the Neo-Latin schooldrama and Seneca. Vondel, exceptionally, adapted Greek tragedy and, following Aristotelian precepts, tried to Christianize the admired examples. The widest-read author here was without any doubt Horace, with Vergil ranking as a good second. Especially Vondel’s work is steeped in Virgilian imagery and thinking. Summarizing studies here are sadly missing but even without systematic investigation it may be stated that most Latin poets have found their way into Dutch literature, with most attention given to the authors that were read in the Latin school, Horace being the undisputed leader in the field. Catullus was used in epithalamic poetry, and “Juvenalisation” — a term coined by Six van Chandelier, who was very well versed in Latin letters — was practiced whenever satires were written. Martial, of course, was imitated in the epigrammatic genre.

The question whether the Republic also maintained her central position from a literary point of view, may on the whole be answered in the affirmative as far as literary import is concerned. A picture develops of an internationally oriented literary business with a fair grasp of what was going on in foreign countries. The picture offered by Price seems to be highly distorted. As he sees it, Dutch literature

was weighed down by the heavy burden of classical literature which it found next to impossible to throw off. In the first place, however, classical literature is extremely varied and definitely not always heavy; and in addition, it has been demonstrated above that the Netherlands were open to the whole of the multicolored literary culture of Southern Europe.

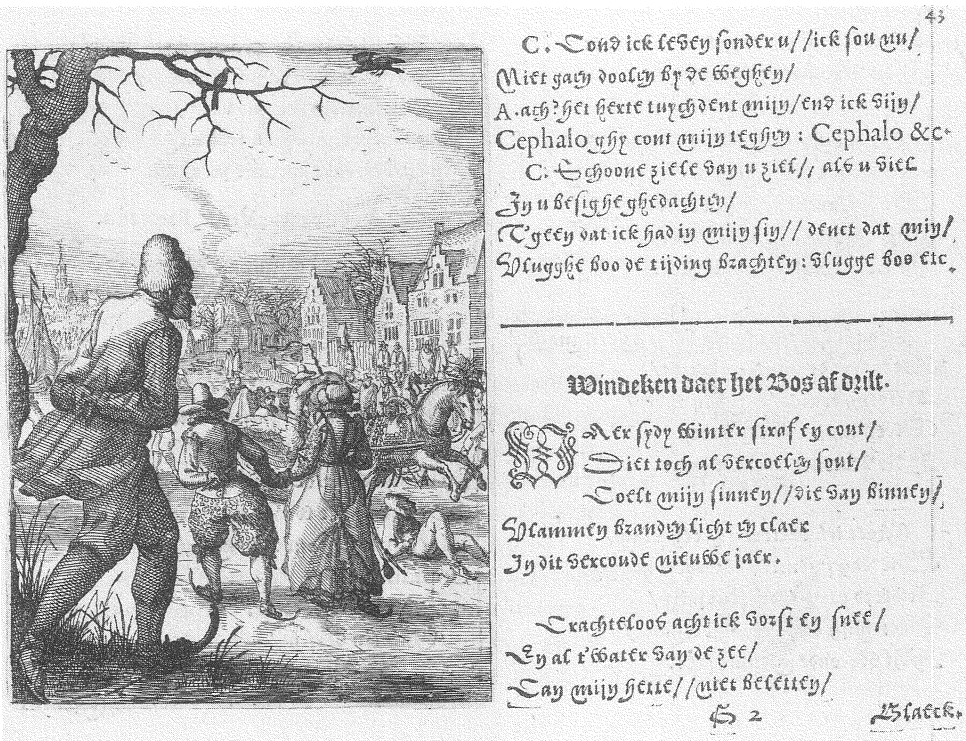
Export of literature

Appreciation of Dutch literature of the Golden Age is evident from the fact that it became an article for export, mainly to Germany, but to a lesser degree also to the Scandinavian countries, particularly Sweden. Once again the first name to be mentioned is Jan van der Noot's. The sonnets in his *Theatre*, translated into German in 1572, were the first German samples of this new lyrical genre.

Somewhat later, the cultural flourishing of the Netherlands attracted travelers from Germany, and particularly Leyden university drew many German students. Even though lectures were in Latin, of course, the Dutch language will not have presented many problems to German students. In the border regions between Germany and the Netherlands, the same dialects were spoken. As mentioned above, the politically dominant position of the Republic and the Dutch trading relations with the Baltic regions had resulted in a fair knowledge of Dutch in Northern Germany. Existing relations between the churches had reinforced the linguistic tie. As a result, many scholars and diplomats were able to express themselves in Dutch with some fluency. In literary matters, there was a feeling of close relationship. In principle, no sharp distinction was made between "low-German" (= Dutch) and "high-German" literature. Cats, Heinsius and Opitz, for instance, were often bracketed together.

Center of attention for the Germans who visited Leyden in the late sixteenth century was Janus Dousa, Latinized name of Jan van der Does. The fact that this scholar — burgomaster during the siege and co-founder of the University — had also written verse in the vernacular, had an encouraging effect on the young Germans who wanted to demonstrate that their language, too, was suited for poetry at an international level. Significantly, a booklet *Encomia Dousana* was published in the German city of Heidelberg in 1587. Noordwijk, a village near Leyden, and Dousa's residence, was called 'Delos Batavorum', the home of the new Apollo and as such had a certain fame in Germany, too.

Later Daniel Heinsius took on the same role. Consequently, many poems from his *Nederduytsche poemata* were translated into German, first and foremost by Martin Opitz. This poet was pivotal in this period which marked the beginning of Dutch-German relations. He first became acquainted with modern Dutch ver-



52. Winterscene. In: *Den bloem-hof van de Nederlantsche jeught*. Amsterdam 1610.

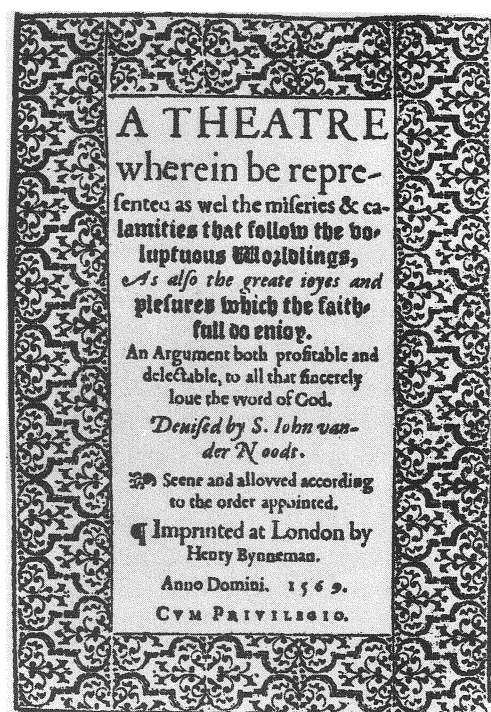
sification, especially the extensively used iambic hexameter, through anthologies like *Den Bloem-hof van de Nederlantsche jeught* (The flower garden of Dutch youth) and the *Thronus Cupidinis*. In the 1624 edition of his poetry he declares his intentions: "It was my intention to blaze the trail and to prove by this beginning the blissful possibilities of our language. In order to make this as clear as possible, I have wanted to devote a large part of this little book to translations from foreign tongues. By comparison one may see the better the purity and ornateness of our language" (Quotation in German in Weevers 1960, 79). In this way he proposed the Dutch literary idiom as an instructive example for German poets who wanted to join the new Renaissance movement. Later, the acquired abilities were also used in translating and adapting the poems of the admired Leyden professor, among them his wide-ranging odes to Bacchus and Jesus Christ. Heinsius' epithalamic poems, too, found wide acclaim and through translations and imitations by Opitz and Kirchner, they were to affect greatly German occasional poetry, both as to structure and motifs.

Beside the Leyden-inspired poetry, the didactic moralistic poems of Cats were also very successful in Germany. Around 1650 no less than nine poets were occupying themselves with various translations of his most important works, presumably because these pious poems filled a need in the demoralized situation after the Thirty Years War. Cats' only dramatic work, the pastoral play *Aspasia* (first ed. 1655) was also greatly appreciated in Germany, as is shown by the existence of no less than four translations/adaptations, all produced between 1660 and 1740. One of the adaptations heavily stressed the comical element, of which the seeds were already present in the original; in other ones the edifying and instructive character was accentuated.

Dramas by Vondel were also translated into German. Andreas Gryphius, for instance, adapted the *Gebroeders* (Brothers). In various other aspects Gryphius' work also shows strong influence of Vondel's language and style, and several moving scenes from Vondelian tragedies were incorporated in Gryphius' own tragedies.

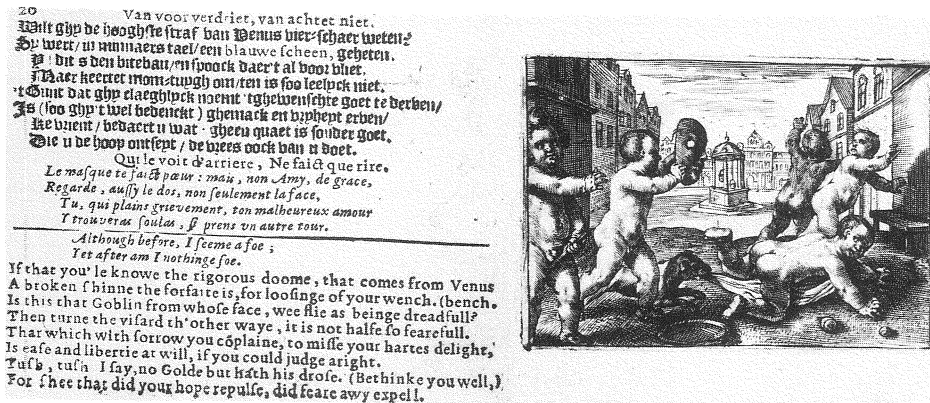
Actually, Dutch drama was enjoyed in Germany not only through translations but also through live performances. In the second half of the seventeenth century a Dutch troupe under the direction of Jan Baptist van Fornenbergh traveled around cities and courts, especially in northern Germany, with an extensive Dutch-spoken repertoire. Hamburg, for instance, was visited regularly. The repertoire contained successful pieces like Cats' *Aspasia*, but also works by Vondel, such as his *Joseph* trilogy and *Gebroeders*. In their turn many German traveling companies used much of this Dutch repertoire in German adaptations.

Much the same also applies to Scandinavia. Relations between the Republic and Sweden, in particular, were fairly intensive. Many Swedes, too, found their way to the famous Leyden University. Especially Daniel Heinsius had strong ties with Swedish diplomats, and among the Dutch scholars that were invited to the Swedish court during the reign of Queen Christina was Heinsius' son Nicolaas, also a classical scholar. In diplomatic and scholarly circles knowledge of the Dutch language was not unusual and Dutch merchants corresponded in Dutch with their Swedish counterparts. The same troupe of Van Fornenbergh that performed in Germany also played in Sweden. Queen Christina received them in Stockholm in 1653. Although she herself was not greatly impressed by the Dutch actors, she did send them on to the Queen Mother in Nyköping, where they had more success. In 1666 Van Fornenbergh was given a commission by the Swedish government to come and play to the Swedish court every year and so a Dutch-speaking court theater was established in Stockholm. At about the same time a public theater was also founded, and here the Dutch troupe naturally performed as well. Scattered references to their performances in the Swedish capital are to be found up till the year 1675. As far as non-theatrical literature is concerned, Cats in particular was known and translated, but traces of other authors may also be found.



53. Title-page of the English translation of Jonker Jan van der Noot, *A theatre ...* London 1569.

Cultural relations between the Netherlands and England were closest in the final decades of the sixteenth century. Many fugitives from the Netherlands arrived in England and among them were several important men of letters, like Jan van der Noot and the poet-painter Lucas de Heere, who showed his interest in Britain by way of a *Corte beschryvinghe van Engeland, Scotland ende Ierland* (Short description of England, Scotland and Ireland). In that period Dutch-language books were also printed in London, as for instance Van der Noot's *Het Bosken*, the first collection of poetry in the Dutch language in which the new Renaissance lyric came into full flowering. The book was printed by Henry Bynneman in 1570. A few years earlier, in 1568, Van der Noot's vehemently anti-Catholic collection *Het theatre* had appeared in a French and a Dutch version. These editions, too, were printed in London, by John Day. An English-language edition, *A Theatre [for] Voluptuous Worldlings*, appeared a year later, this time printed by Henry Bynneman. The translations of the poems here were by the hand of the seventeen year old Edmund Spenser who later incorporated some of them in his *Complaints* (1591).



54. Emblem in Jacob Cats, *Sinn- en minne-beelden*. In this very rare edition. S.l.s.d. [after 1629?] English translations of the poems have been provided, probably by Josuah Sylvester.

In their turn many Englishmen went to visit the Netherlands a little later. The contacts became intensive during Leicester's stay in the Netherlands. His retinue included English men of letters of whom Sir Philip Sidney was the most prominent, and in Leyden cordial relations arose between the English and a university group that had formed around Jan van Hout and Dousa. Sidney's tragic death on the battlefield incited many literary reactions in the Netherlands, too, but the language used was almost exclusively Latin, or in a few cases French. The Dutch and the English associated culturally on equal terms, but Latin was the language used and Latin poetry was the tie that united them. Rarely, traces are to be found of any export of Dutch language material, the only exception being, once again, Jacob Cats. A trilingual edition of his *Sinne- en minnebeelden* appeared at the end of the twenties. It was probably Josuah Sylvester who signed for the English translations. Concerning a slightly later period, some scholars have suggested that Milton might have derived the central theme of his *Paradise lost* from Vondel's *Lucifer*. Flattering though this idea might be to Dutch literature, the evidence is flimsy. Comparative investigation has shown that themes of the 'celestial cycle' were so widespread during the Renaissance that such vague similarities as exist between the two works, offer little in the way of proof of any borrowing.

Another field might be investigated with more success. Strong indications exist for the influence of Dutch studies of literary theory in England, for instance Heinsius' *De tragoediae constitutione*. The vast compilations of G.J. Vossius on rhetoric and poetics found their way to Britain, too. But here we have already left the domain of Dutch literature and entered that of Neo-Latin letters. If that were

our topic names of other authors who supplied literary export products, should be mentioned, first of all Hugo Grotius. But that is outside the scope of this book.

Dutch literature has never become world famous, not even in the Golden Age when circumstances were particularly favorable. Even then, it was no more than the literature of a small nation with a relatively limited diffusion. On the other hand, it played a modest transmissive role, in accordance with the Republic's position as a port of transit, and it was able to do so because it laid itself open to much, if not to all, the world had to offer.

Ten poems
with translations by A.F. Harms



55. Esaias van de Velde, *Banquet in a garden*. cf. the poem on p. 166.

Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft*Aen een nieuwgeboren Jongen*

O Jongen, versse vrucht, die wt het slaeprigh leven
In moeders schoot geleeft, door spooen van den tijdt,
Die niet in stilte laet, tot ouders vreughde zijt,
In der zinnen gewoel, en 't waeckend licht gedreven.
Nu heeft u de geboort aen 't Luck overgegeven,
Dat school van wissel houdt; de droevighe verblijdt,
De blijde droevigh maeckt; verheft, en nedersmijt;
En tussen hoop en vrees, doet alle sielen sweven.
Op onversufte moed, de zegherijcke Godt
Geef u te schutten af, de pijlen daer het Lot,
In sijn verbolghenheid u meede sal beschieten:
Oock haere gaeven, als 't u mildelijck bedenckt,
En rijckdoom, wellust, eer, wt volle vaeten schenckt,
Met danckbare genoeght, voorsichtig te genieten.

In: Hooft 1970, 33.

Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft*To a new-born boy*

O little boy, fresh fruit, expelled from drowsy night
Within your mother's womb, urged onward by time's pressure
— Which never grants us peace — to your parents' great pleasure
Into sensations' storms and into wakeful light;
Birth now surrendered you to Fortune's fancy flight;
She keeps a school of change, metes out a motley measure
Of joy and misery, of won and wasted treasure
So that here every soul hangs between hope and fright.
God, in His mercy, grant your heart will never yield
But all the shafts deflect like a protective shield,
That in its angry wrath, Fate will be aiming on you.
And that you'll gratitude and perfect prudence show
For every benefit her bounty may bestow
By heaping honor, wealth and joyfulness upon you.

Gerbrand Adriaensz. Bredero*Liedeken*

Snachts rusten meest de dieren,
 Oock menschen goet en quaat,
 En mijn Lief goedertieren
 Is in een stille staat.
 Maer ick moet eensaam swieren,
 En cruysen hier de straat.

Ick sie het swierich dryven,
 Ick sie de claare Maan.
 Ick sie, dat ick moet blyven
 Alleen mistroostich staan.
 Ach lief, wilt my gheryven
 Met troostelijck vermaan.

Ach Lely hoogh verheeven
 Verheven in mijn sin,
 Mijn hoope van mijn leven,
 Ghewenste, schoon Vriendin,
 Wilt my u jonstich gheven
 Een lieve weder min.

Met hoop en vrees bevanghen,
 Met een ghestaeghe stryt
 Van sorghen en verlangen
 Verwacht ick nu ter tijdt
 Van u myn troost t'ontfangen
 t'Woort daar men lang om vrijt.

Myn vruchteloos verwachten
 Myn commer niet en blust,
 Sult ghy my heel verachten
 Och voester van mijn lust
 Maer siet ick onbedachte,
 Claagh nu, sy leyt en rust.

Och slaapt ghy myn behagen,
 Dewyl ick doe myn clacht?
 Wat baat my dan myn claagen
 Nu ghy den dooven slacht.
 Ick salt gheduldich draagen,
 Ick wensch u goede nacht.

Adieu *Prinsesge* jeughelijck,
 Mijn Vrou van mijn ghemoet;
 Adieu en droomt gheneughelijck,
 En slaapt gerust en soet:
 Ach tis my soo onmeuchlijck,
 Te rusten als ghy doet.

In: Bredero 1975, 481-482.

Gerbrand Adriaensz. Bredero*Song*

Most creatures rest at night-time;
So do men, good and bad.
In still repose, this high time,
My sweet love rests her head.
While I, alone, spend my time
Roaming the streets, instead.

I see the grey clouds straying
Across the moon, so clear;
I see my poor self staying
In lonesome misery here.
My dearest, hear my praying
Console me, lend me ear!

O lily, tall and slender,
Highest in my esteem!
Hope of my life, so tender,
Desired friend supreme!
Would that thou didst me render
A love, matching my dream.

Now, hopeful, then dejected,
In lasting strife I brood.
I've fretted and expected
That from thy lips I should,
O comfortness perfected,
Hear what so long I wooed.

I pine without fruition
My sorrows stay and grow
Fostress of my ambition
Must thou despise me so?
But, witless is my mission:
She sleeps, I'm filled with woe.

Whilst I remain tormented
Dost thou sleep, my delight?
In vain, then, I lamented
Before thine ears, shut tight.
Yet, I'll bear this contented
And wish thee a good night!

Adieu, my little princess
Dream well and happily!
My lonely heart's sole mistress
Slumber most peacefully!
Alas, the world's my witness,
There's no such rest for me!

Joost van den Vondel*Aen de Beurs van Amsterdam*

Doorluchtigh koopsloot, meesterstuck
 Van KEIZER, die ons Koopgeluck
 Aen uw gerief zoo dier verplichte,
 Wat geest heeft uwen naem bedocht?
 Spruit die van 't velt, dat Dido kocht,
 Toen zij haer hof en Koopstat stichte?
 Of heeft de Beurs dien naem Gebaert,
 De Beurs, die 't gelt met zorgh bewaert?
 Zoo blijf de Zedigheid bevolen:
 Want schepen brieven, gelt en goet,
 En Beursgeloof is eb en vloet.
 De Beurs wort om haer gelt bestolen:
 En wat 's een geldelooze Beurs?
 Een koopmans gasthuis vol getreurs.
 De Beurs heeft oock haer Martelaren.
 De winst verandert met den wint.
 D'een mist het geen een ander vint.
 'T is kunst te winnen en bewaren.
 Uw wissel draeft vast op en neêr.
 Dat postpaert maeckt wel knecht van heer,
 En Reinout kan het schaers berijden.
 Het slaet dan voor dan achter uit,
 En van ter zijde; en wort gestuit
 Met smert; dies pas zijn hoef te mijden.
 Verzekert ghij het zeegevaer;
 Wat borgh zal uw verzekeraer
 Verzeeken van uw scha te boeten,
 Daer 't grimmelt van onzekerheên?
 De terling geeft u zes, of een...
 Wie weet wat kans u zal gemoeten?
 Daer nu de zuil 't gewelfsel stut,
 Dooch eertijts, in zijn rieten hut,
 De visscher, die met list van fuicken
 Den gaeuwsten Aemstelvisch bedroogh,
 Daer Koopliên, onder uwen boogh,
 Nu zon, nu regenbuy ontduicken.
 Mistrouw dan vrij uw Koopfortuin.
 Karthago leit bestulpt met puin,
 En waer is Tijrus? waer de muren
 Van Sidon, en zijn koopmansstraet?
 Het Beursgeluck dat komt en gaet.
 'T geluck kan zelden steen verduren.

BUERSKNECHT

In: Vondel IV 1930, 548-549.

Joost van den Vondel*To the bourse of Amsterdam*

Great trade-hall, KEYSER's work of art
 Who so obliged our trader's heart
 By your convenience surrounded,
 What mind, indeed, had you thus named?
 Was 't from the field that Dido claimed*
 When she her court and city founded?
 Or did the purse leave its name there,
 The purse, where money's kept with care?
 Be prudent then, or you 'll be hit.
 For funds and goods, ship's letters show
 That they, like credit, ebb and flow:
 A purse is for its money slit.
 A fundless Bourse spells nought but doom:
 A trader's hostel, filled with gloom.
 Of martyrs, Bourses have their portion.
 The profit changes with the winds:
 One loses what the other finds.
 To gain, and keep, takes skill and fortune.
 Your exchange bill trots up and down;
 That horse may lose a prince his crown
 And riding it makes Reynout scary.
 It kicks toward the front and back
 And sides; who stops it, is left black
 And bruised, so for its hoof be wary.
 You underwrite the risk at sea:
 What underwriter's surety
 Ensures that you'll be compensated?
 All's insecure, so there is none.
 The die will give you six or one.
 How are your chances to be rated?
 Where pillars now the vault support,
 In his reed hut the fisher sought
 Erenow, his crafty traps to lower
 And catch the Amstel's swiftest fish.
 There, 'neath your arches merchants wish
 To find refuge 'gainst sun and shower.
 Your trader's luck, therefore, mistrust:
 In ruins lies Carthage, and dust;
 And where are Tyre, the walls of Sidon,
 Its noble merchants and its streets?
 Fortune in trade comes and retreats.
 Rare's luck that lasts like stone and iron.

*byrsa

The Bourse attendant

Constantijn Huygens*a. 's Heeren Avondmael*

Is 't weer dijn' hooghe Feest, en ick weer van de gasten?
Maer, Heer, het Bruijloftskleed daer in ick lest verscheen
Is over halver sleet, jae 't en gelijckt 'er geen,
En ick sitt moedigh aen als of 't mij puntigh pasten.
Hoe waer de wraeck besteedt, soo Ghij mij nu verrasten,
En uijtter deure dreeft in 't eewighe geweene!
Noch borght ghij mij 't gelagh, en op Geloof alleen
En wat boetveerdicheids, en laet mijn' ziel niet vasten.
Dit's dan 't boet-veerdigh Hert. maer 't veerdigh gaet niet veer:
'T is geen begonnen werck. Wanneer wil 't boetigh wesen
Voor nu, voor gisteren, en voor den tijd naer desen,
Eens boetigh voor altoos; en wanneer wilt Ghij 't, Heer?
Is 't altijd weer wat nieuws, en altyd weer op 't ouwe?
Oh dat mij 't holl berouw eens endtelick berouwe!

In: Huygens 1968, 109-111.

Constantijn Huygens*a. On the Lord's Supper*

Is 't your High Feast again, and did you re-invite me?
But, Lord, the wedding garb I wore the other day
Does not resemble one, 't is worn more than half way
And I do dare to sit as if it fitted rightly.
It were but just revenge if you would now indict me
And drive me from the door, damned into deep dismay.
Still, you pledge me the fare; if just my faith would stay
And I'd be penitent, you'll feed the soul inside me.
I'm willing to repent, but willing will fall short.
It is a hopeless task. When shall I find occasion
To rue the present, past and future perpetration?
Once penitent for aye? When do you want it, Lord?
A penance every time that old sins are ensuing?
Oh, that at last I'd rue all of this hollow ruing.

Constantijn Huygens*b. Rad van onrust*

Mijn leven is gespeekt met witt' en swarte laghen:
 Veel hebb ick willen doen, meer heb ick moeten dragen.
 Mijn Doen is trouw geweest en vlijtigh, daer het most,
 Veeltids was 'twerck gedaen als 't even scheen begost.
 De Vrucht is Vreugd geweest van Wel-doen, en wat gaerens
 Van nooddrufts middelen, wat opdoens en wat spaerens.
 Mijn Dragen is, voor Goed, Haet, Nyd en Spijt geweest
 En alle daghe schier een nieu ondanckbaer beest.
 Misduyd' onnooselheit, krackeelen valsch geweven,
 Veeltids mijn goed gedreight, somtyds eens lid of leven,
 Voor oude vriendschap nieu bedrogh, en swarte kunst
 Van averechts beleid voor toegeseghde gunst.
 Rust hebb ick niet gekent; als alle oogen toe zijn,
 En alle menschen dood, om datse satt of moe zijn,
 Haer halve leven dood, en sommige wat meer,
 Diens sinnen geen gebreck en prickelt, noch geen' eer,
 Dan ben ick oock 'tkleed uijt en 't rust-bedd in gekropen,
 Om wat lang niet te zijn, en als mijn selfs t'ontloopen:
 Maer qualik quam 't soo verr: 'tscheen dat mijn dagh aenquam,
 Als ick mij neder leid' en 'tslapen ondernam.
 't Hiet rusten, dat ick deed, maer 'twaeren besigheden,
 Die mijn' versuften geest meer als 's daeghs wercken deden.
 Mijn' oogen sloten niet, of 'theete werck ging aen;
 'T was droomen inder daed, en schijn en yd'le waen;
 Maer nacht-werck eigentlick, en qualick t'onderscheiden
 Bij 'twoelen van den dag, welck waerheit was van beiden.
 (En wat is waerheit, heeft die Richter licht gedocht
 Of wat hij sagh, of wat syn' huijsvrouw droomen moght.
 Elendigh Richter, sooder een elendigh oyt te noemen
 En te verdoemen was!) Nu heeft de dagh sijn' Bloemen,
 En heeft sijn distelen; vermaeck en ongenucht
 De Bruijloft en het graf, het lacchen en 'tgesucht
 Gaen veeltijts over handt, en houden beurt met poosen;
 Doen een de doornen zeer, hij lydt het om de Roosen.
 De Sonn schijnt naer 'tvuijl weer, en inden Storm wel oock:
 Het soete Vier betaelt het suere van den roock:
 Maer droomen houdt geen beurt, 'tis altyd stof van klagen:
 Een grouwelicke droom is droevigh om verdragen,
 Een liefelicke geeft meer onlusts ongelijck
 Dan sijn verheugen was: Besitt een Coninckrijck,
 En werdt een Bedelaer in meer niet als twee uren,
 't Scheel is onmenschelick, wie kan daer tegen duren?

Constantijn Huygens*b. The restless balance wheel*

This life of mine is streaked with layers of white and black,
Much I've aspired to do, still more found in my pack.
I've laboured faithfully, with diligence wholehearted
And oft the work was done, when I had scarcely started.
The fruits have been delight in doing good and having
Life's first necessities, some earnings and some saving.
For that I've borne a load of malice, sorrow, hate,
And almost every day someone grossly ingrate,
Innocence misconstrued and falsely woven strife,
My goods in jeopardy and sometimes limbs or life!
For friendship old: new fraud and diabolic ill
Of policies adverse to firmly pledged good will.
Rest was unknown to me; when all had lost sensation
And ev'ry eye was shut, from tiredness or potation
— They're half their lives like dead, some even more, indeed
Their senses unprovoked by honour or by need —
At last I'd undress, too, between the sheets I'd creep
To be not for a while, escape myself in sleep.
But rarely this occurred, it rather did appear
That day arrived whene'er I thought that sleep was near.
Resting, it's called, but I found that my dizzy mind
Was more than in the day milling the daily grind.
My eyes were hardly shut or it would start: the frenzy
Indeed, they were but dreams, delusions and mere fancy
But night-work actually, scarcely to be declared
Different from daily work, when truthfully compared.
What, anyway, is truth, may that judge once have thought:
Was 't what he saw, or what her dreams his wife had taught?
Mis'able judge, if e'er one aptly thus was named,
And damned for evermore. — For flowers day's acclaimed,
But it has thistles, too; enjoyment and distress,
The wedding and the grave, laughter and mournfulness
Are often handed out in alternating doses:
Although the thorns may hurt, it's suffered for the roses.
Sunshine succeeds black clouds and light tempestuous gloom
The sweetness of the fire pays for the acrid fume.
But dreams are always pests, for all their variation:
A dream that's horrible is a sore tribulation,
A lovely one provides more sorrow when it's gone
Than that it gave delight: to have a royal throne
And be a beggar yet, within a two hours' span
Is an inhuman change, unbearable by man.

Vlieght over Bergh en Dal de valck uijt haer gesicht,
En vindt u in uw Bed voll plaesters en voll Gicht,
Wat een hard averechts van sulcken lochten hoogmoet!
'T is seker datter wel een traentjen uijt het oog moet,
In 't heugen waer men was, in 't voelen wat men is.
[En wat een' Modder-goot scheelt van eens Koninghs Dis.]
En dat is 'tlieve loon van ingebeelde Welvaerd,
Datm' in den Hemel schickt te zijn en inde Hell vaert,
En smaect het ongemack van lyden soo veel bet
Als vrolick vliegen scheelt van karmen in syn bedd.
Dus heeft het mij gegaen, van dat ick wist wat leven
En doen en lijden was: en 't waer noijt uijt geschreven,
Verhaelden ick all 'tleed dat mij gedroomde vreughd
En swaericheit gedroomt gekost heeft vander jeughd.
En 'tgaet mij noch alsoo ten einde mijner dagen,
Iae tot dicht op mijn Graf sal ick die onrust dragen,
Soo'ck niet verkeert en giss; jae hoe de kracht meer slijtt,
Gevoel ick dat men meer en meer van lyden lydt.
Is 'twonder dat ick wensch met alle mijn' gedachten
Uijt all' die dagen, uijt all' die versufte nachten
Een saligh eind te sien, en eens uijt waere pijn,
En eens uijt valsche vreughd, eens uijt den droom te zijn?

Paris 8. Jan. 1664

In: Huygens VII 1897, 37-38.

To fly o'er vales and hills, outdistancing the hawk
And wake up in one's bed, so gouty one can't walk,
That is a hard come-down from such a lofty pride.
Who would not understand that many tears are cried
When mem'ry tells what was, the senses say what's present
[The gutter's here and now, the feast is evanescent]
So that's the sweet reward of dreaming all as well:
One thinks one is in Heaven and one is bound for Hell.
One's ills and ailments are perceived more sharply, yet,
Than jolly flight exceeds one's groaning in one's bed.
Thus was it in my case, from the first moment I
Knew labour, suffering, life: impossible to try
And write down ev'ry pain that dreamt delight and mirth
And dreamt adversities have cost me since my birth.
And still I am the same, although the grave now bides me.
E'en at its brink I'll bear this unrest yet inside me,
If I'm not far amiss; indeed I must confess
One suffers suffering more and more as strength grows less.
Small wonder that I wish with all my concentration
To all those troubled days, and night-long cogitation
To see a blessed end, when from true agony
And from false joy released, from life's dream I'll be free.

Paris Jan. 8 1664

Jan Six van Chandelier

a. *Vischmaal, aan Manuel Spranger.*

De reegen zynde 't woord, na al het drooge weer,
 Om dan een soodjen visch, in onsen tuin, te kluiven,
 Nu soet gevallen, tot verquikkingh van het teer
 Gebloemt, en swellinghe van peeren, persen, druiven,
 En tot verkoelingh van d'onlydelyke brand,
 Der sonne, die den mensch versmelten dee, door sweeten
 Als sneeuw tot een rivier, wan hy, op 't oopen land,
 Geklooven, en gescheurt, plaisierigh meinde t'eeten.
 Zoo kom dan welkom, naa de beurs, op 't vyverpad,
 In myn plaisanten tuin, op schootels uit rivieren,
 Of Hollands zee vereert, na dat de vischmarkt had,
 In hooimaand, van geschubde, en ongeschubde dieren.
 Men weet de kabeljauw, de schelvis, kuitertbot,
 Steur, parrelvisch, en voorn, die hebben ons het tiende,
 Elk, op bequaamen tyd, geoffert in de pot.
 Nu zyn de tarbot, salm, en baars ons tong versiende,
 Met braasem, haaringh, post, tongh, krabbe, en somwyl kreeft,
 Niet slimmer wyl de maan, die vullende, is aan 't wassen.
 Wy sullen sien wat God, voor vangst, gegeeven heeft
 En 't tafelkleed bebloemt, na syne gaaven passen.
 Weesps halve maan, en star zal u den dorst verslaan,
 En om de teeringh, in de maage, te doen klemmen,
 Zoo zal een Hochemer ons drenken, met een saan.
 De visch bemint het vocht, en wil wel drymaal swemmen:
 In waater eerst, daar naa in sausse, en dan in wyn.
 De wyn is oorsaak van een lustigh saamenkoomen.
 Set sorgen wat ter syde, en laat ons vroolik zyn.
 Wat baat het, of wy 's daags ons quellen, en 's nachts droomen,
 Van oorlogh met den Teems? Laat Hollandsch Admiraal,
 Met Londens zeegeesach, van sorge, om Lauwerkroonen,
 Hun haar versilveren. Sy brengen vuur, en staal,
 Malkander nydigh toe, met donderende toonen.
 Ik zal, op goed gevolg van d'eerste waaterslagh,
 Een grooten roomer, met verheugde druivedouwen,
 U setten op de hand, verselschap met een lach,
 Of Hollandsch liedjen van Wilhelmus van Nassouwen.
 Dan blyf ik vaste borgh, dat u Terwelborgh zal
 Met zulken munt voldoen, niet minder dan van Heeden,
 En Kemp, geen breekers van het spel. Sie daar 't getal,
 Wel booven dat van dry, maar neegen niet, getreeden:
 By welken, Spranger, ik u op het vriendelikst bid,
 Dat ghy u vinden laat, gelyk 't aansienlikst lid.

In: Six van Chandelier 1991, 303.

Jan Six van Chandelier*a. Fishdinner, to Manuel Spranger.*

Rain serves us as parole that after all the drought
It's time for nibbling fish together, in my garden.
The drops that sweetly fell, refresh the tender bloom
And swell to larger size the pears, the grapes, the peaches
As well as cool the hot, insufferable fire
Of Phoebus, who did tend to liquefy by sweating
Like snow thaws into stream, man, who out in the open
On cracked and riven land, thought pleasantly to banquet.
So be then, after hours, welcome beside the pond
In my delightful garden, at dishes from the rivers
Or Holland's seas invited, as the fish-market stocked.
July's a month for seafood, whether with or without scales.
It's known that haddock, cod, and flounder fat with roe,
Sturgeon, oyster and roach have offered up the tithe
Each at the fitting time, and landed in our pot;
And now are turbot, salmon and perch gracing our tongue
With bream, and herring, sprat, sole, crab and sometimes lobster
The better now the moon is filling up and waxing.
We'll see what kind of catch the Lord above has given
And make the flowered cloth befit his ample blessings.
Weesp's crescent and its star¹ will doubtless slake our thirst
And to facilitate intestinal digestion
Soon after we shall have some hock to satisfy us.
Fishes do long for fluid and crave a threefold swim
In water first, then sauce and finally in wine.
The wine then will ensure our meeting will be merry.
Let's put aside our troubles and remain full of cheer.
No use to fret by day and pass the night with dreaming
Of warring with the Thames. Let Holland's Admiral
And London's Naval Pow'r be anxious for laurels
And make their hairs grow grey. They shell with fire and steel
Each other angrily, with thundering, booming sound.
I shall, to our success in the first naval clash
A good-sized rummer filled with joyful drops of grape-dew
Put right into your hand, accompanied by laughs
Or by a Dutchman's song of Willem van Nassouwen.
And I do pledge my word, Terwelborgh, too, will pay
A similar tribute, no less than both van Heeden
And Kemp, no spoilsports they! See, there's the quantity
Though rather more than three, well under nine remaining,
To which, dear Spranger, you most courteously are bidden:
Please let yourself be found and come as guest-of-honor.

1. i.e. a special kind of beer

Jan Six van Chandelier

b. *Oesters te Kolchester.*

Hoe meenighmaal, getrouw Kolchester
Verkracht, door 't kooninghslachtigh heir,
Ten roem van uw kasteel, en vester,
Haakte ik, om oover Noordens meir,
Na hier, myn leeven te betrouwen,
Al was 't slechts met een vischers schuit,
Van dunne planken saam gevouwen,
Te wulps belust, en daar op uit,
Dat ik myn waaterende tanden,
En onversaadelyke smaak,
Ter deegh mocht tergen, langs uw stranden,
Aan oesterputten, die schier braak,
In slikken van de zeeeb, leggen,
Om zoo de varsche siltigheid,
Waar oestereeters veel van seggen,
Te proeven, tot recht onderscheid?
O! oestertjen, met groene baardjes,
O! blanke bolle, en volle beet,
Betaal myn snoeplust vry, met schartjes,
Aan 't mes, ter schulpknops breuk, gesmeedt.
Laat nu, en dan een ander vinger,
Met uwe vliempjes, drupplen bloed,
Met ik uw zieltjen glad inslinger,
Zoo krygh ik hart, en nieuwen moed.
Dat Kent, ons Vlieland, dat oud Baaijen,
En zoo der eedler oester is,
Bereidt, of raauw, om 't lekkerst kraaijen,
Ik keur Kolchesters raauwen visch.
Geen beeter saus dan d'eige soppen,
In 't dubble schulpjen genatuurt,
Met Lissebons limoene droppen,
Met sout, en peeper wat gevuurt.
O! lekkernytje, sonder enden,
Al ooverloopt de volle maagh,
Hoe lang de tanden kunnen schenden,
Zoo blyft de smaak al eeven graagh.
Al had ik Polifemus darmen,
Noch zou ik, van de kleinte, karmen.

In: Six van Chandelier 1991, 765.

Jan Six van Chandelier*b. Oysters in Colchester.*

How many times, faithful Colchester
Though sacked by regicidal troops
— Hence, honor to your keep and ramparts —
The North Sea did I want to cross
And hither trust my life and limbs,
If only on a fishing boat,
Of fragile boards pleated together,
Too concupiscent, wholly set
To whet my salivating teeth
And never sated appetite
In fullest measure, by your beaches
At oysterbeds, that, almost dry
Are lying in the low tide's mud-flats
And sample the fresh saltiness
So often praised by oyster-eaters
And savor and distinguish well!
O, thou green-bearded oyster fair
O pallid, convex, complex bite
Freely repay my greed by notching
My cutter forged to break your shell.
Though from this or another finger
Your lancets drops of blood may draw
As soon as I dispatch your body,
My heart and courage stronger grow.
Let Kent, our Vlieland, let old Baayen
Or where yet nobler oysters rest
Praise, cooked or raw, their own stock highest,
I deem Colchester's raw fish best.
No better sauce than its own juices
As ripened in the double shell
And by some lemon drops from Lisbon
With salt and pepper seasoned well.
O infinitely dainty titbit!
And were the full paunch overflowing,
If yet the teeth are fit to ravish,
The appetite will still be showing.
If mine were Polyfeme's intestine
Its smallness still I'd be protesting!

Willem Godschalck van Focquenbroch

Gedachten op mijn kamer.

Hier in dit kleyn, doch stil vertrek,
Tracht ick alleen mijn vreugt te soecken;
Hier, schoon 't geluck mij keert de neck;
Vind ick vernoevingh in mijn Boecken,
En houw de werelt voor mijn geck.
Al 's werelts vreught aght ick een spook,
Die men op 't vaerdighst siet verswinden.
Dit leer ick hier, wijl 'k sit en smook;
Mits ick daer daeghlycks uyt kan vinden,
Dat alle vreught is min als roock.
Dit leer ick op mijn Sel gewis;
Want waer 'k hier mijn gesicht kan keeren,
Stracks vind ick een gelijckenis,
Die my, uyt 't geen ick sie, doet leeren,
Hoe ydel dat de werelt is.
Een Greyns die ick van var aenschouw,
Leert my de weerelt wel bekynen;
Mits d'Ontrouw sigh vermomt met Trouw,
En dat een schelm kan eerlijck lijcken,
Soo men de schyn gelooven souw.
Sie ick op mijn Fiool, en Fluyt,
Die doen my mee een leeringh vinden;
Want eeven eens gelijck 't geluyt
Noch nauw gehoort, voort gaet verswinden,
Soo dra heeft mée het leeven uyt.
Sie ick wat snorre pijpen aen,
My uyt vermaeck wel eer gegeven;
Soo laet ick mijn gedaghten gaen
Op d'ydle vreught van 't jeugdigh leeven,
Die d'ouderdom haest doet vergaen.
So mijn gesicht een Flesje vat,
Gevult met Balsem, voor veel wonden;
Dunckt 't leeven my geen groote schat,
Vermits dat somtijts is gebonden,
Alleenigh aen een druppel nat.
Sie ick de Wapens aen ter zy,
Die my mijn ouden Aedel toonen;
Ick vind my van die sorgen vry,
Die steeds omtrent de Hooven wonen;
En spot met al die slaeverny.

Willem Godschalck van Focquenbroch*Thoughts in my room.*

In this small room there is no sound,
A solitary joy's my treasure.
Since fortune here no more is found
I now get from my books my pleasure
And thereby mock the world around.
All wordly joy I deem a shade
A short and vanishing illusion.
I sit and smoke here, by which aid
I daily come to the conclusion:
Of less than smoke is pleasure made.
My cell thus fosters sanity:
Where'er I look I see the glaring
Examples of inanity
That teach me, while my eyes are staring
The world is nought but vanity.
The grinning mask that I espy
Shows that the world needs close inspection.
To pose as truth, will untruth try
And knaves will don a saint's perfection:
A fool would trust what meets the eye.
My fiddle and my flute display
A lesson, strikingly appearing
'Cause like a sound that fades away
Almost before it strikes one's hearing,
So fleeting is a mortal's stay.
The baubles that I look upon,
As a diversion once presented,
Give often cause to ponder on
The hollow joys of youth, lamented
When old age comes and spring is gone.
When on a phial my eyes fall
With balm for many wounds entrusted,
Life looks not great to me at all
In that it sometimes is adjusted
By drops of medicine so small.
And when the coats-of-arms I see
My old nobility displaying,
Then I am from the cares set free
That always 'round the Courts are staying;
I mock at all that slavery.

Of sie ick voor my, op het Beeldt
Van Karel, d'Oude Britsche Kooningh,
So dunckt my dat het niet veel scheelt,
Of 't leeven is maer een vertooningh,
Daer yder mensch sijn Rol in speelt.
't Is waer d'een toont een Majesteyt,
En dees een Arm man, die een Rijke.
Elck scheelt hier veel in Heerlijckheyt;
Maer die in 't graf haer quam bekijcken,
'k Geloof, hy sagh geen onderscheyt.
Of sie ick van ter zijden aen
De Beelden van mijn Bloet-verwanten;
So segh 'k; wie kan de doot weer staen?
Want schoon 't Copy hanght aen dees wanten
Het Principael is langh vergaen.
So maeckt de doot elck een tot slijck,
En spaert geen slaef, noch knecht, noch Heeren
Want ider moet 't zy arm, of rijk,
In 't geen hy eertijts was, verkeeren;
So maeckt de doot elck een gelijck.
Dit brengt my hier, mijn Eensaemheyt
Gestadigh voor, in mijn gedachten;
So dat ick leer, geen seeckerheyt
Van al des Weerelts vreught te waghten
Want alles is maer ydelheyt.

Uit: Focquenbroch s.d., 123.

Or when I contemplate the face
Of Charles, who once ruled Britain's nation
I ponder: is not life a case
Of stage-play and dramatization
Where each man fills an actor's place?
True, one portrays here majesty
A Lazarus or Dives, others.
As different as their stations be,
Their graves reveal that they are brothers.
Bones show no inequality.
And when a sidelong glance I cast
At pictures of my blood relations
I think: death claims us all at last.
Though on my walls hang imitations
The models perished in the past.
The fate that death turns each to dust,
All servants, serfs and lords see beckon;
Both poor and rich men always must
With their return to ashes reckon;
Death equalizes all, I trust.
This is the food my privacy
Brings ever to my rumination
I learn that no security
Comes from the world's luxuriation.
For everything is vanity.

Heymen Dullaert

Aan myne uitbrandende kaerse.

O haast gebluschte vlam van myne kaers! nu dat
Gy mynen voortgang stut in 't naerstig onderzoeken
Van nutte wetenschap, in wysheidvolle boeken,
Voor een leergierig oog zoo rykelyk bevat,
Verstrekt gy my een boek, waar uit te leeren staat
Het haast verloopende uur van myn verganklyk leven;
Een grondles, die een wys en deuchtzaam hart kan geven;
Aan een aandachtig man, wien zy ter harte gaat.
Maar levend zinnebeeld van 't leven dat verdwynt,
Gy smoort in duisternis nu gy uw licht gaat missen;
En ik ga door de dood uit myne duisternissen
Naar 't onuitbluschlyk licht, dat in den Hemel schynt.

In: Dullaert 1719, 63.

Heymen Dullaert

To my perishing candle.

O candle, soon extinct will be your sputtering light!
As you thwart my pursuit of deep investigation
Of volumes full of wisdom and useful information,
For the inquiring eye so amply codified,
You offer me a book, from which I thus may read
That soon this mortal flesh will see its own hour ending;
A lesson, fit to make sincere and understanding
Any keen person's heart that will th'example heed.
But, living parable that life evaporates,
You'll smother in the dark, and gone will be your brightness;
While I shall by my death go from a night that's lightless
To light that, never quenched, from Heaven emanates.

Jan Luyken*Air*

Droom is 't leven, anders niet;
't Glijt voorby gelijk een vliet,
Die langs steyle boorden schiet,
Zonder ooyt te keeren.
d'Arme mensch vergaapt sijn tijt,
Aan het schoon der ydelheid,
Maar een schaduw die hem vlijt,
Droevig! wie kan 't weeren?
d'Oude grijse, blijft een kint,
Altijd slaap'rig, altijd blind;
Dag en uure,
Waart, en duure,
Word verguygelt in de wind,
Daar me glijt het leven heen,
't Huys van vel, en vlees, en been,
Slaat aan 't kraaken,
d'Oogen waaken,
Met de dood in duisterheen.

In: Jan Luiken s.d., 57.

Jan Luyken*Air*

Life is nothing but a dream
Passing faster, it would seem.
Than a swiftly rushing stream
That knows no returning.
Man is prone to waste his time
He deems vanities sublime,
Gapes at what 's but shade and slime
Without ever learning.
Still a child, although he grays,
Sleepy, blind he ever stays.
Without cease
To the breeze
Squandering precious hours and days.
Life's thus spent in idleness.
In the house of bone and flesh
Cracks appear
And eyes peer
At the mystery of death.

Chronology



1500

1523 First protestant martyrs burnt at the stake

1539 Rhetorician's festival at Ghent

1540 *Veelderhande liedekens*

1550

1555 Abdication of Charles V. Philip II king of Spain, ruler of the Netherlands

1558 *Veelderhande gheestelicke liedekens*

1560

1565

1566 Iconoclastic fury; presentation of the nobles' petition; origin of the destination 'geuzen'

1568-1648 Eighty Year's War

1568 Van der Noot, *Theatre* (publ. in London)

1570

1570 Van der Noot, *Bosken* (publ. in London)

1572 Capture of Den Briel by Sea Beggars

1574 Leyden resists a Spanish siege; is granted a University

1575

1578 Amsterdam takes the side of the Revolt

1580

1581 Abjuration of Philip II

1584 William I of Orange murdered; succeeded by his son Maurits as Stadtholder

1585 Fall of Antwerp

1585-1587 Leicester governor of the Netherlands

1590

1595

1600

1605

1608-1612 Reclamation of the Beemster by Leeghwater

1609-1621 Twelve Year Truce

1610

1615

1618-1619 Synod of Dordt

1620 Hendrick Avercamp, 'Winter scene with a frozen canal'

1622 Cornelis Drebbel gives demonstration of submarine in river Thames

1625 Grotius, *De iure belli ac pacis*1584 Spiegel, *Twe-spraack*; Lipsius, *De constantia*, also published in Dutch1585 Coornhert, *Zedekunst dat is wellevenskunste*1587 Coornhert, *Boeventucht*1604 Van Mander, *Schilder-boeck*1605 Hooft, *Granida*1611 Heinsius, *De tragoediae constitutione*; Hooft, *Emblemata amatoria*;1612 Vondel, *Pascha*; Coster, *Teeuwis de boer*1614 Roemer Visscher, *Sinnepoppen*; Spiegel, *Hertspiegel*1615 Hooft, *Reden van de waerdicheit der poesie*; Heinsius, *Nederduytsche poemata*1617 Bredero, *Moortje*; Hooft, *Warenar*1618 Bredero, *Spaanschen Brabander*; Cats, *Sinne- en minnebeelden*1620 Vondel, *Hierusalem verwoest*1623 *Zeeusche nachtegael*; Vondel, *Lof der zeevaert*1624 Camphuysen, *Stichtelijcke rijmen*; an. *Wonderlicke avontuer*; De Brune, *Emblemata*1625 Vondel, *Palamedes*; Huygens, *Otia*; Cats, *Houwelick*1628 Stalpart van der Wiele, *Gulde-jaer*

- 1630
- 1632 Foundation of the Amsterdam Athenaeum illustre
- 1634 Voetius, *De pietate cum scientia coniugenda*
- 1635
- 1637 Descartes, *Discours de la méthode* (publ. in Leyden)
- 1638 Inauguration Amsterdam Theatre
- 1640
- 1642 Rembrandt, 'Night Watch'
- 1645
- 1647 Death of Stadtholder Frederik Hendrik. Willem II Stadtholder
- 1650 Death of William II. No successor appointed
- 1652-1654 First English war
- 1655
- 1656 Christiaan Huygens constructs pendulum clock
- 1660 Vermeer, 'View on Delft'
- 1661-1662 Rembrandt, 'Conspiracy of Claudius Civilis'
- 1665-1667 Second English war
- 1670 Spinoza, *Tractatus theologico-politicus*
- ca 1671 Ruysdael, 'Jewish Cemetery'
- 1632 Cats, *Spiegel van den ouden ende nieuwen tijd*; Revijs, *Overijsselsche sangen en dichten*
- 1635 Schabaelje, *Lusthof des gemoets*
- 1637 Vondel, *Gijsbrecht van Aemstel*; Heemskerck, *Batavische Arcadia*; Cats, *Trou-ring*
- 1640 Vondel, *Gebroeders*; Joseph in *Dothan*
- 1641 Vos, *Aran en Titus*
- 1642 Hooft, *Nederlandsche historien*
- 1644 Huygens, *Momenta desultoria*
- 1645 Huygens, *Heilighe daghen*; Vondel, *Altaergeheimenisen*
- 1650 Vondel, *Aenleidinge ter Nederduitsche dichtkunste*
- 1651 Van de Merwede van Clootwijk, *Roomse min-triomen*
- 1653 Huygens, *Hofwyck*
- 1654 Vondel, *Lucifer*; Cats, *Invallende gedachten*; Vos, *Zeege der schilderkunst*
- 1655 Cats, *Aspasia*
- 1656 Cats, *Hofgedachten op Sorghvliet*
- 1657 Vondel, *Jeptha*; Six van Chandelier, *Poësy*
- 1660 *Hollantsche Parnas*
- 1661 Vondel, *Tooneelschilt*
- 1662 Vondel, *Bespiegelingen van Godt en Godtsdienst*
- 1665 Focquenbroch, *Thalia*
- 1667 Vos, *Medea*
- 1668 Asselijn, *Mas Anjello*; Sluiter, *Buitenleven*

-
- | | |
|--|---|
| 1672 French invasion; war with France, England and two small German states. Lynching of Johan de Witt. William III Stadtholder | 1672 Huygens, <i>Koren-bloemen</i> (2nd impr.) |
| 1672-1678 Closing of Amsterdam Theatre | |
| 1675 | 1675 |
| 1680 Anthonie van Leeuwenhoek appointed member Royal Society, London | 1677 Pels, <i>Q. Horatius Flakkus Dichtkunst</i> |
| | 1680 |
| | 1681 Pels, <i>Gebruik en misbruik des tooneels</i> |
| | 1682 Vondel, <i>Poesy</i> in 2 vols., with a biography of the poet by Geraardt Brandt |
| 1685 | 1685 |
| 1688 Glorious Revolution | |
| 1690 | 1690 |
| 1695 | 1694 Luyken, <i>Het menschelijk bedrijf</i> |
| | 1695 Nic. Heinsius jr., <i>Den vermakelyken avanturier</i> |
| 1700 | 1700 |
| | 1711 Luyken, <i>Leerzaam huisraad</i> |
| | 1720 Bidloo, <i>Panpoeticon Batavum</i> |
| | 1722 Poot, <i>Gedichten</i> |
| | 1729 Wellekens, <i>Bruiloftdichten</i> |
| 1738 Jan Swammerdam, <i>Biblia naturae</i> (posth. publ.) | |
| 1750 | 1750 |
| | 1753 Snakenburg, <i>Poëzy</i> |

Bibliographical notes



General

A comprehensive bibliographical review of Dutch literature, complete from 1960 onwards, may be found in the series *Bibliografie van de Nederlandse taal- en literatuurwetenschap (BNTL)*. Because it is intended to extend the bibliography backwards in time, the series, curiously enough, has started with vol. 22. Access is through a subject and author index. One has to bear in mind, however, that specific themes, such as nature, are listed under the lemma “thema”, which gives an alphabetical list of subjects. The literary part of the bibliography is arranged according to periods. The period 1600-1830 contains the major part of the Golden Age material. For the sixteenth century material one has to consult the preceding section.

The main journals that contain studies on Dutch literature are *De nieuwe taalgids* (since 1907), *Spektator* (since 1971), *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse taal- en letterkunde* (since 1881), *Spiegel der letteren* (since 1956) and *Literatuur* (since 1981).

The English-language *Dutch Crossing* often contains translations of Dutch literary work in addition to scholarly articles. The same goes as well for the *Canadian Journal of Netherlandic Studies*.

The most recent literary history is Knuvelde 1970-1976. Vol. II (1971) deals with the period 1567-1766. Literary histories in English are Weevers 1960 (with an anthology of poetry) and Meijer 1978². Van Bork-Verkruysse and Winkler *Prins lexicon* afford data on authors from the Golden Age.

Chapter I. Poets in society

For the historical background of the Golden Age see AGN VI-VIII 1979-1980. The various volumes contain essays by many authors on socio-economic, political, socio-cultural and religious history with extensive references. Informative as well as richly illustrated are Groenveld 1983 and 1985.

For cultural history one should consult, apart from the works by Schama 1987, Price 1974 and Regin 1976 the four volumes in which A.Th. van Deursen (1978-1980) has collected his important source-based studies on various aspects of middle-class life in the Republic.

Subtopics

The history of Amsterdam: van Gelder-Kistemaker 1983.

The immigration from the Southern Netherlands: Briels 1974 and 1985.

Cultural networks: Hummelen 1982; Smits-Veldt 1984 and 1989; Spies s.d.; Strenghtolt 1986; Worp 1920.

On Samuel Costers didactic rhetorical plays within the framework of *De egelantier* and the *Nederduytsche Academie*: Smits-Veldt 1986.

On *Nil volentibus arduum*: Pels 1978 and Harmsen 1989.

Female authors: Schenkeveld- van der Dussen 1980; Spies 1986.

Patronage: Waterschoot 1975; de Vet 1985; Burke 1974; Groenveld 1988.

Public: Grootes 1987.

Chapter II. Poetry and religion

A quick orientation in spiritual life in the sixteenth and seventeenth century is given by Veke-man 1982 with extensive references.

Unfortunately, there exists, so far, no overall study of the relation between religion and literature. Monographs will have to do, of which a small selection is offered here. Important for the sixteenth century is the introduction in Smit 1939. For the seventeenth century see van Es 1952.

The productive and widely-read Mennonite brothers Schabaelje are dealt with in Visser 1988, with extensive bibliography.

On the poetry of the Nadere Reformatie much may be found in the Blokland 1965. Strenghtolt 1976 contains many studies dealing with Jacobus Revius in his Calvinist context.

On religious metaphysical poetry see ten Harmsel 1977.

For Roman-Catholic poetry see van Duinkerken 1932 and Mensink 1958.

On the moralizing works of Jacob Cats: Margolin 1970 and Carter 1974.

On biblical theater: Parente 1987; Smits-Veldt 1989.

On Vondels (biblical) drama the standard work is Smit 1956-1962; Langvik-Johannessen 1963.

In a broad European context the struggle of Protestant ministers against the theater is discussed in Wille 1963. On the role of *Nil volentibus arduum* in this matter the introduction in Pels 1978.

Chapter III. Literature and ideology

Brinkkemper-Soepnel 1989 is a Dutch adaptation with Dutch material of Isabel Rivers' study *Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry*, London 1979.

Literature as opinion leader in moral-philosophical and political matters has become a popular subject in recent years. An important author in the field is Marijke Spies, who has discussed especially Vondel's work from this point of view, while also devoting due attention to his use of rhetorical techniques. Her *magnum opus*, which contains an extensive bibliography is Spies 1987. On Vondel and the Amsterdam townhall see Spies 1979.

On the creation of a national literature: Bostoen 1989 and van Ingen 1989.

A voluminous anthology on the militant literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth century is Buitendijk 1977². A recent collection of studies on the 'Wilhelmus' offers de Gier 1985.

For the philosophical and social thinking of Coornhert see the recent collection of essays in *Coornhert* 1989 and the introduction to the edition of *Boeventucht* in Coornhert 1985. This text, together with a related one by Jan van Hout, has been translated into French in Brachin s.d.

On libertinism in the Netherlands: Haks 1988; Schenkeveld- van der Dussen 1989 deals especially with Matthijs van de Merwede van Clootwijk.

On the cautiously critical plays by Thomas Asselijn: Meijer Drees 1989.

On political discussions in lyrical form: Smits-Veldt 1977; Schenkeveld- van der Dussen 1989b.

Chapter IV. The poet and everyday life

On genre paintings and their often literature-based meanings: de Jongh 1976; Sutton 1984.

Comedy and farce: Brumble 1975-1976; Snapper 1984.

Narrative prose: Grootes 1982-1983, with extensive bibliography; Grootes 1984; *Volk en boek* 1989.

Emblematics: Porteman 1977; Scholz-Heerspink 1974-1975; Scholz 1979.

Specific authors

Alpers 1975-1976 and Miedema 1977 (Bredero); Schenkeveld- van der Dussen 1983 (Six van Chandelier); Schenkeveld- van der Dussen 1985 (Focquenbroch); Grootes 1978 (Huygens).

Chapter V. Moral landscapes

The relation between painting and literature with respect to the description of the landscape: Brom 1957. p. 205-14; Schenkeveld- van der Dussen 1986; King 1987; Beening 1963 offers a rich collection of material.

Country house poems: van Veen 1960; Gelderblom 1979; 1986; 1988; de Vries 1987; 1990; van Pelt 1981.

Physical theology: Bots 1972.

Pastoral literature: Kettering 1983; Blommendaal 1987; Smits-Veldt 1989.

Chapter VI. Literature and the visual arts

Relation between painting and poetry: Snoep 1975; Schwartz 1984; Porteman 1984; Sluijter 1988.

On the significance of Karel van Mander Hessel Miedema wrote a number of studies, of which the principal one is Miedema 1973.

On Vondel and the art of painting: Porteman 1987.

Epigrams to paintings: Emmens 1981; Porteman 1986; Woodall 1990.

The Zeeland poet-painter Adriaen van de Venne: van Vaeck 1988.

Theater and painting: Hellinga 1956. Schwartz 1984 points out many relations between paintings by Rembrandt and tragedies shown on the Amsterdam stage. This elicited a discussion: Meijer Drees 1985.

On the conflict between Pels and Vos about Rembrandt: Emmens 1964; Pels 1978.

On Vos and the theater: Skrine 1982.

Chapter VII. Holland as a literary and cultural staple market

On the bolstering of the Dutch language: van den Branden 1956.

The distribution of the Dutch language: Muller 1921.

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Education: AGN VII 1980. p. 256-305.

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To Germany: Bornemann 1976; Dünnhaupt 1980-81; Forster 1977; Kiedron 1989; van Ingen 1978; Krispyn 1981; Schroeter 1905.

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To England: Forster 1967; Sellin 1968.

Studies of the relationship between Cats and Milton and between Vondel and Milton in Bulough 1964 and Hughes 1964.

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General: Augustinus 1980-1981; Meeus 1983 with on p. 219 a list of translated authors.

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England: Alblas 1987 and 1989; Bachrach 1962; Becker-Cantarino 1978; Colie 1956 and 1959 (with a.o. a discussion of Huygens' *Heilige dagen* as metaphysical poetry); Daley 1990; van Dorsten 1962; Nassau-Sarolea 1973-1974; Nieuweboer 1984; Hanou 1981; Ophoff-Maas 1984; Riewald 1984; Scherpbier 1933; Schoneveld 1983; Schorr 1978; Schrickx 1986; Strenghtolt 1989.

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DE DEKKER, des op 't spoor van Vondel, nieftebreken
Te keer gace, en in dieht het fchorgh Dutch loer greden.
Die 't ghijpon aen de wick der ed'le Deen
Heelich in deze print naer Rembrandts fchiltcey
Voor vian der Dichtaren, vuer vian hel by te zwicken
Natuur, Verfant en Kenst volmaeken zyn' gedichten.
M. BROUWER VAN NIDDERG. G.

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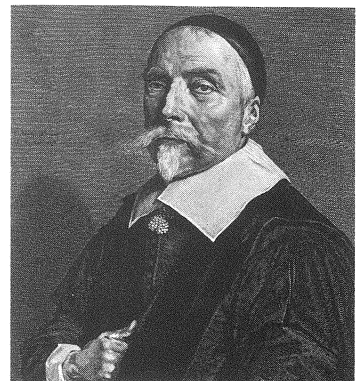
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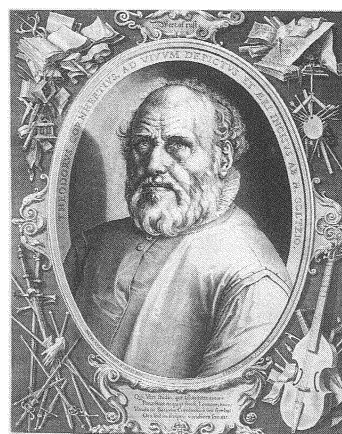
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